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BENGALEE MOSLEM PUBLIC OPINION AS REFLECTED  
IN THE VERNACULAR PRESS BETWEEN 1901 AND 1930

Thesis presented for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
in the University of London

by  
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## Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to portray Bengalee Moslem Public Opinion as reflected in the Bengalee Moslem Press from 1901 to 1930. The thesis falls into two parts. The first comprising chapters I to VI, deals roughly, though not exclusively, with the external relations of the Bengalee Moslem community with :

- the Moslem World of the Middle East (Chapter I);
- the British and the Hindus in political matters (Chapter II);
- the Hindu community generally (Chapter III);
- Moslem reactions to Hindu-oriented Bengali Literature (Chapter IV);
- Moslem reactions to the Hindu-dominated educational system introduced by the British (Chapter V); and
- Moslem reactions to the Hindu-dominated economy introduced by the British (Chapter VI).

An underlying theme during this first part of the thesis is the increasing consciousness of Moslems of their own identity and their attempts to preserve it by separatist efforts. This same theme continues throughout the second part dealing with press clippings on Language (Chapter VII) and Society (Chapter VIII), but here the internal relations within Bengalee Moslem society gain prominence especially in relation to what

was ultimately to be their mother-tongue, Bengalee or Urdu;

and where in fact did the unity of their society lie.

## Acknowledgement

I like to take this opportunity of tendering my thanks to all those who helped me in the successful completion of this project.

First and foremost I owe a special debt of gratitude to my supervisor Dr. J.V.Boulton for without his never-failing help, invaluable guidance and encouragement this thesis would never have been completed.

I would also like to thank those of the Trustees of the British Museum, the Librarian and staff of the School of Oriental and African Studies, the India Office Library and the Senate House Library for the help they gave me in locating books and periodicals in their possession.

I must also thank the Government of Pakistan for awarding the scholarship which enabled me to complete this thesis and also thank Mrs. E.W.Garland and Miss. S.Earnshaw for typing it for me.

## Transliteration

### Vowels :

a (অ)	ā (আ)	i (ই)	ī (ঈ)	u (উ)
ū (ঊ)	e (এ)	ai (ঐ)	o (ও)	au (ঔ)
r̄ (ঋ)				

### Consonants :

k (ক)	kh (খ)	g (গ)	gh (ঘ)	ṅ (ঙ)
c (চ)	ch (ছ)	j (জ)	jh (ঝ)	ñ (ঞ)
ṭ (ট)	ṭh (ঠ)	ḍ (ড)	ḍh (ঢ)	ṇ (ণ)
t (ত)	th (থ)	d (দ)	dh (ধ)	n (ন)
p (প)	f, ph (ফ)	b (ব)	bh (ভ)	m (ম)
y (য)	r (র)	l (ল)	v (ব-বর্ণনা)	ś (শ)
ṣ (ষ)	s (স)	h (হ)	r̄ (ৱ)	rh (ৱ)
y' (য়)	m̄ (ম)	h̄ (ঃ)	~ (ঁ)	ks (ক্স)

We have generally followed the above scheme in transliterating from Bengali into English the names of books, periodicals, institutions and so forth. Where, however, such names and those of persons and places are familiar to the general public in their own peculiar spelling we have abandoned the scheme and retained the familiar spellings, as for example, Veda, Vidyasagar, Rabindranath, Nazrul Islam, Bankura and Jinjira etc.

## Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
Abstract	II
Acknowledgement	IV
Transliteration	V
Introduction	1
Chapter I The Moslem World	12
Chapter II Politics	58
Chapter III Hindu-Moslem Relations	146
Chapter IV Literature	190
Chapter V Education	241
Chapter VI Economics	290
Chapter VII Language	320
Chapter VIII Society	374
Conclusion	408
Appendix	427
Bibliography	472

## INTRODUCTION

### A. The source materials.

The source materials for the present thesis may be broadly classified as Primary and Secondary. The former comprise the excerpts and information extracted from a number of journals and periodicals. A comprehensive list of these journals and periodicals appear in the appendix. The ones most frequently cited in the thesis are: Islām-pracārak, Mihir o sudhākar, Kohinur, Pracārak, Nur-al-imān, Nabanūr, Al-Eslām, Islām-darśan, Baṅgiyā-Musalmān-sāhitya-patrikā, Saogāt, Moslem Bhārat, Dhūmketu, Choltān, Sāmyabādī, Sariyate Eslām, Gaṇa bānī, Māsik Mohāmmadī, Sikhā, Sāptāhik Saogāt and Moyājjin. Most of these journals and periodicals are preserved in East Pakistan, in the libraries of the Bengali Development Board and the Bengali Academy in Dacca and of the University and Varendra Research Museum in Rajshahi. Most of the remainder were in private collections in Dacca, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Bogra and Sirajganj, though a few are also preserved by the British Museum in London.

The Secondary source materials comprise the published works of other scholars and my personal correspondence with persons closely associated with the vernacular Bengali

Moslem Press between 1915 and 1930. These secondary sources have not, however, been utilised in the main text of our thesis. We have deemed it more advantageous to use them rather to elucidate the text, where necessary, in footnotes and also in the compilation of descriptive notes in the appendixes.

B. The works of earlier scholars.

The works on the Bengali Press known to us are:

Rev. James Long	<u>A Descriptive Catalogue of Bengali Works</u> , 1855
Ramgati Nyayratna	<u>Bāṅgālā bhāṣā o sāhitya bisṣyak prastāb</u> (ed. Girindra Nath Banerji), 1910
Jogindranath Samaddar & Rakhraj Roy	<u>Sāhitya pañjikā</u> , 1915
Kedarnath Majumdar	<u>Bāṅlā sāmāyik sāhitya</u> , 1917
Mohammad Reyajuddin Ahmad	'Introduction', <u>Pāk-pañjatan</u> , 1929
Brajendranath Banerji	<u>Sambādpatre sekāler kathā</u> , 2 vols., 1949
	<u>Bāṅlā sāmāyik patra</u> , 2 vols., 1936 and 1952

Benoy Ghosh

Sāmayik patre Bāmlār samāj

Citra, 5 Vols., 1962-1969

Abdul Kadir et al

Muslim Bāmlā Sāmayik patra, 1966

Anisuzzaman

Muslim Bāmlār Sāmayik patra, 1969

The majority of these are descriptive catalogues providing factual information on the names of the journals and periodicals, details about the editors and publishers, and in some instances an indication of the scope and purpose of the publications listed. Though valuable, such catalogues can scarcely be considered as regular histories of the Bengali press. The most noteworthy ventures in this category are: Rev. Long's Catalogue, Nyayratna's Bāngālā bhāṣā o sāhitya biśayak prastāb, Samaddar and Roy's Sāhitya pañjikā, Majumdar's Bāmlā sāmayik sāhitya and Banerji's Bāmlā sāmayik patra. Of these the most remarkable is Banerji's, covering a period of 80 years or so (1818-1900) and describing more than 1,000 publications, the highest number so far dealt with in a single volume. To his credit it may also be added that he also includes a large number of Moslem journals.

Despite Banerji's book, however, the works referred to above largely ignore the vernacular Bengali Moslem Press.

No more than a score of Moslem journals and periodicals find a mention there.<sup>1</sup> Before the birth of Pakistan in 1947, the two most important works dealing with the vernacular Bengali Moslem Press were: Roushan Ali's paper on the subject, which was incorporated in Jogindranath Samaddar and Rakhalraj Roy's joint publication, Sāhitya pañjikā, published from Calcutta in 1915; and Mohammad Reyajuddin Ahmad's introduction to Pāk-pāñjatan. These were presumably the first two writings to deal exclusively with the Moslem press. But they also are somewhat disappointing in that neither goes beyond giving rather sketchy descriptive information, and both are in fact little more than the personal reminiscences of their authors, who were both intimately associated with a number of publications. Unfortunately, Ahmad's paper was compiled towards the end of his life, when his memory was excusably defective. His lapses must, one presumes, be set down to this cause.<sup>2</sup>

Not all the works on the Bengali press were catalogues, however. Brajendranath Banerji's Samādpatre sekāler kathā and

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1. References to the highest number of Moslem periodicals are found in the Bengal Library Catalogue, which from 1867 regularly appeared as an appendix to the Calcutta Gazette. It was a quarterly official report giving descriptive information on the publication of books and journals in Bengal.

2. See Anisuzzaman, Muslim Bāmlār Sāmāyik Patra, 1969, p.66 f.n.1.

Binoy Ghosh's Sāmayikpatre Bāmlār samāj citra aimed not at giving a historical account of the Bengali press, but at presenting a picture of Bengal life during the 19th and early 20th centuries, as reflected in the contemporary press. Bengalee Moslem life finds no place in either work, however: both concentrate on Hindu concerns alone.

Of recent years interest in earlier Moslem journalism in East Pakistan has been rekindled, as is evidenced by the appearance of two important books during the 1960s. The first of these, Muslim Bāmlā Sāmayik Patra (1966), is a compilation of 12 separate essays by different authors. These essays provide detailed information on some major journals, namely Mahāmmadi Akhbār, Hitakarī, Mihir, Mihir o Sudhākar, Hāfej, Pracārak, Nabanūr, Al-Eslām, Moslem Bhārat, Dhūmketu and Kohinur. The information provided includes comprehensive facts about the journals together with an account of their contents. Some essays afford a few excerpts from various articles, giving some idea of the nature of contemporary Bengalee Moslem public opinion. There is also a brief historical account of Bengali Moslem journals published between 1831 and 1947. Separately considered, each of the essays contained in the volume are valuable, but, taken as a whole, the book fails to present a

consistent, complete picture. The book lacks a comprehensive plan or purpose. Each essayist wrote according to his own individual ideas and inclinations. Consequently, the same fact is occasionally repeated.<sup>3</sup> In arranging the essays, the compiler appears to have intended to follow a chronological scheme, but this is not maintained.<sup>4</sup> One deduces from lapses such as these that the volume was compiled hurriedly.

The later publication to date on the vernacular Bengali Moslem press is Dr. Anisuzzaman's Muslim Bāmlār Sāmāyik patra published in 1969. It covers a century, starting in 1831 and describing more than 150 Moslem journals. The catalogue is extensively descriptive. It gives detailed information concerning the date and period of almost every publication together with facts about editors, publishers, sponsors and patrons. It also cites the editorial aims of many of the journals. In the course of preparing this thesis we have had to check information and data provided by Dr. Anisuzzaman and find on the whole that he is more reliable than the majority of earlier scholars. The most valuable section of Dr. Anisuzzaman's book to our mind is, however, the presentation of selected indexes from the major journals. These give at least some idea of the nature of Moslem literary

3. See the introductory portions of Abdul Kadir's essays: Mihir, Mihir o Sudhākar, Hāfej and Kohinur.
4. Otherwise, the essay entitled 'Kohinur' would have been placed seventh rather than last.

pursuits in the earlier period. Finally, the book contains a number of selected excerpts from important writings reflecting contemporary Bengalee Moslem thought.

C. The scope for the present thesis.

It seems to us that all the studies so far made of the Bengali Hindu press belong to one of two categories: one, descriptive catalogues of journals and periodicals; and two, works like Brajendranath Banerji's Sambād patre sekāler kathā and Binoy Ghosh's Samayikoatre Bānlār samājcitra, which seek to portray Bengalee Hindu social life as reflected in the contemporary press.

Our aim in writing the present thesis has been to attempt to do for Moslem Bengalee social life, what Banerji and Ghosh have already done for Hindu social life in Bengal. Nevertheless, through appendix we have also sought to provide a descriptive catalogue of the Bengali Moslem press, based upon a combination of the researches of earlier scholars and myself.

The dates chosen to demarcate our period were not entirely fortuitous. The three decades from 1901 to 1930 witnessed a remarkable expansion in the Moslem Bengalee vernacular press. This expansion was undoubtedly stimulated by a growing interest

on the part of Bengalee Moslem society in concurrent political events: the partition of Bengal, the svadeśī and terrorist movements, the founding of the Moslem League, the Khilāfat movement and so forth. Other factors contributing to this expansion were those associated with a clash of attitudes in Bengalee Moslem society precipitated by the spread of western education. Conservative sections of society wished to resist all change in an effort to preserve and enrich what they thought to be their Islamic heritage. More westernised sections of society sought to modify Islamic institutions so as to enable Moslems to compete more effectively with their Hindu neighbours for a more proportionate share in the political, educational, economic and cultural life of modern India; a desire which was finally to find expression in the concept of Pakistan, that was first feebly voiced round about 1930, the year of the Round Table Conference.

D. The topics discussed in the thesis.

The topics we have chosen to discuss are those on which there seem to be a fair number of articles available. They are: the Moslem world, Politics, Hindu-Moslem relations, Literature, Language, Economics, Society / <sup>and</sup> Education.

Taken as a whole, they present a picture of Bengalee Moslem society struggling to identify itself and define its position in the world. The various questions which arise in the course of this topic-wise discussion are: Were Bengalee Moslems primarily Moslems, Indians or Bengalees? Where did their allegiance lie - to their cultural and religious origins in the Middle East, to the subcontinent in which they were born, or to the region of that subcontinent where the mother tongue of the majority of them was spoken, namely Bengal? Another set of speculations arising during our discussion concerned the relations of the Moslem community with Hindu society both within India generally and within Bengal in particular. Were Bengalee Moslems to reject the Bengali language and literature because of its predominant Hindu orientation, or were they to establish for themselves a separate place within that literature? And, economically were they to remain for ever subservient to the Hindu community, because of religious prohibitions preventing them from fully accepting the world-wide, capitalist economy, or were they to modernise their religious outlook in order to accommodate themselves to the economic system prevailing throughout the modern world? In regard to education, were they to accept a western, Hindu-oriented educational system,

which would undermine their religious beliefs and erode their sense of identity, or were they to insist upon inculcating into the young an Islamic form of education which was out of step with the modern world and which, whilst preserving them as Moslems culturally and religiously, would leave them permanently at the mercy of Christian and Hindu exploitation? And finally Society. How far could Bengalee Moslem society really claim to be unified, and what really was the basis of that unity? Did a unity in fact exist? Or was it being created during the period under discussion?

E. The approach adopted.

In arranging and presenting our materials we have tried in the main text to be as objective as possible. Our main concern has been to give the views of the various editors and contributors, either in summary or in direct quotation under various headings and sub-headings, so as to reflect, as far as our source material allows, the various controversies which arose in the press. Our own personal comments have been kept to the barest minimum. We have assumed on the part of the reader a considerable knowledge of Indian history,

especially in regard to political developments between roughly 1880 and 1947. Where possible, we have given dates in some of our headings, so as to enable the readers to envisage the various controversies and discussions within the wider, political frame-work of events, that he himself is assumed to possess. Where, however, it has been thought that certain passages might appear obscure without further elucidation, we have given footnotes explaining certain terms or reminding the reader of certain events.

The thing is that we were largely embarrassed by the profusion of materials we had to hand. Had we attempted a full analysis and discussion of any one of the extremely important topics with which we have dealt, then that topic alone could virtually have formed a thesis. We realise that much further elaboration is possible in regard to all the topics we have discussed. Nevertheless, we do feel that since all these topics are interrelated, and since this thesis is virtually a pioneer work in regard to the Moslem press, a somewhat less elaborate discussion, giving, however, the fullest possible amount of source material available in the vernacular, is pardonable.

If our pioneering proves of value to later scholars, then our labour will not have been in vain.

## Chapter I

### The Moslem World.

The region of their origin, real or imagined, - the Middle East had always fascinated the Moslems of Bengal. Place names like Arab (Arabia), Iran, Turān (Turkestan), Khorāsān (Afghanistan), Sām (Syria) and Miśar (Egypt) had been familiar to them from the very beginnings of Moslem Bengali literature in the 15th century. The achievements of Prophets, Pirs - Dervishes, Caliphs, Sultans and heroes in those far-off lands had constantly excited their imaginations. The histories, traditions and mythologies of those realms, so remote in time and space, had none the less for the Moslems of Bengal a very homely ring, especially during the 18th and 19th centuries, when Dobhāṣī literature<sup>1</sup> flourished, flooding Bengal with its Middle-Eastern borrowings.

The literature had forged strong, emotional links between Moslems of Bengal and those of other lands, and these links were further strengthened by the frequent

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1. A particular form of literature in mixed diction. For further information see chapter on Literature, p. 220

visits of Sufi saints, traders and adventurers from Middle-Eastern lands, as well as by daily, weekly and annual prayers facing the kābā (in Mecca), and also by the Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca. Furthermore, the 19th century had brought to Lower Bengal Wahabi Maolānās and Fārāidi leaders, who also contributed to driving the gaze of Bengalee Moslems beyond the boundaries of British India, which Wahabis<sup>2</sup> condemned for not being Dār-ul-Islām, a land of Islam.

Possibly the behaviour of their Hindu Bengalee neighbours also helped to rivet Bengalee Moslem attention outside Bengal. The Hindus had long been intent on the discovery of past Hindu greatness. Rammohan Roy (1774-1833) had found inspiration in his exploration of the Upaniṣads, Bankimchandra (1838-'94) in the Bhāgavat Gītā and Ramkrishna (1835-'86) in Hindu mysticism. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries Hindu Bengal found itself inspired by the novel concept of br̥hattar Bhārat (Greater India, which extended as far as the isles of Java, Sumatra and Bali). Their imaginations were kindled by the modern Asian seats of Buddhism, Japan and

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2. See p.45 fn. 70.

China. Similarly, the gaze of Bengalee Moslems, frustrated by failures at home, sought consolation in the contemplation of the wider horizons of the Moslem world.

In view of this persistent preoccupation it is not surprising that, when Bengalee Moslems turned to journalism, they continued to be fascinated by events in the Middle East. In framing the following chapter, based on press extracts connected with these events, we have divided our materials into five sections:

- I) The reporting of political events in the Middle East from 1877 to 1909;
- II) The reporting of political events in the Middle East from 1909 to 1923;
- III) The reporting of political events in the Middle East from 1924 onwards;
- IV) The display of Bengalee Moslem sympathies in the press towards Moslems the world over; and
- V) The heralding of the political awakening of the whole Moslem world by Saugāt in 1930.

The last two sections are largely self-explanatory, the first three require comment. These three sections constitute in effect an attempt, either consciously or unconsciously, on the part of Bengalee Moslem journalists to discover a focus of

attention, whereby the Moslems of Bengal might be unified. Up till 1923 the natural and obvious focus of Moslem attention and sympathies was primarily of course, Turkey, either intrinsically or as symbolised in the person of the Sultan and in his Ottoman Empire, Islam's pride. The attitude of Bengalee Moslem journalists towards other nations during this period was determined largely by the behaviour of those nations towards either Turkey itself or Moslems in general. Consequently, Russia was seen as the arch enemy of Islam, France as nearly as bad, and Britain as the best of a bad lot.

Any phenomenon concerning the Ottoman Empire in those days was deserving of mention in Moslem Bengalee news and editorial columns. Damascus-Hedjaj Railway Fund is mentioned so frequently as virtually to become a barometer of pro-Moslem sympathies. Jews and Christians within the Ottoman Empire constituting, as they did, a source of both anxiety - because of possible Russian incursions on their behalf - and propaganda - because their occasional displays of loyalty could be held up as examples of proper behaviour to Jews and Christians elsewhere - also earn frequent mention. <sup>3</sup> But perhaps most attention goes to the 'atheistic' Young Turks,

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3. See p.22 f.n.15.

whose activities were eventually to decay from within the Ottoman Empire so adored by the Bengalee Moslem press during the early period.

Moslem editors between 1909 and 1923 appear to have been somewhat blinkered. They deplored the activities of the 'atheistic' Young Turks, who were seeking to secularise Turkey, turning it into a modern democratic Republic, yet at the same time they were gradually groping for similar constitutional, democratic reforms in India, which would give them as a community a greater say in the government of their home-land. What must be borne in mind, however, is that Turkey was largely a symbol of an ideal Islamic state, dominated by the Caliph-Sultan, in whom both spiritual and temporal power resided. The precise significance of this symbol seemed to vary for individual editors. The more conservative and reactionary wished genuinely to preserve it intact and for ever as a glowing symbol of the true meaning of Islam. Others, more progressive and liberal, wished to use it merely as a symbol to unite Bengalee Moslems with Hindus in the struggle for India's independence. Unconsciously they probably sympathised with Mustafa Kemal's (1881-1938) desire to secularise and modernise Turkey.

From 1924 onwards the same underlying clash of attitudes and sympathies is seen in the reporting of events elsewhere in the Middle East. All editors seem to continue to have a common interest in focussing Bengalee Moslem sympathies on Middle Eastern questions so as to produce a unity within their community, but it is evident that some editors are prepared to praise progressive movements abroad, liberalising religious attitudes and producing social reforms, whilst others continue to condemn these deviations from tradition.

Nevertheless, an overall pattern is discernible. Up to about 1911 most sections of the Bengalee Moslem press appear to have been loyal to the British Government in India and to have desired merely to unify their own community on the basis of Islam and its cultural origins, the Middle East. Gradually, however, almost all sections of the press grew more critical of the British and desired a greater degree of self-government. Nevertheless, basic divisions existed in the press, some being extremely orthodox and conservative, and others more liberal and progressive in outlook. With these comments in mind, let us now enter into the details of our materials.

## I

1877 - 1909

Russo-Turkish War (1877-78) to the deposal  
of the Sultan of Turkey, Abdul Hamid II (1909)

(a) Turkey: the centre of the sympathies of Bengalee  
Moslem Press

(i) Turkey as a whole

In 1877 Mahāmmadi Akhbār called upon Bengalee Moslems to contribute to save the innumerable widows and orphans of valiant Turks, who were laying down their lives to protect the Moslem holy places, Mecca, Bāitul Moqāddes, Medina, Kārbālā from the Russians.<sup>4</sup> "Send money to succour them", the editor cried, "look, religious merit (saofāb) is being sold cheaply. Buy it up. Heaven is available at a low price. Do not miss this opportunity."<sup>5</sup>

Islām-pracārak in 1899 lamented the passing of a great

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4. This refers to the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-78. The Sultan of Turkey was regarded by Indian Moslems as Khalifātul Muslemīn (i.e. the spiritual and temporal head of the Moslem world). His war with Kāfir (infidel) Russia was, therefore, in their eyes Jihād (i.e. a religious war), and evoked deep, wide-spread sympathies among them. In Bengal "religious services were held in some of the Calcutta mosques, and subscriptions were raised to succour the sick and wounded and the families of soldiers who might fall in the war; ..." C.E. Buckland, Bengal under the Lieutenant Governors, Vol. II, 1901, p. 691.
5. Editorial, Mahāmmadi Akhbār, June 15, 1877.

Moslem hero, Gazi Osman Pasha,<sup>6</sup> 'The right hand of His Excellency Amirul Mūmenin' (commander of the faithful), the Ruler of the Ottoman empire. Osman Pasha's death had "plunged the whole Moslem world into intense grief."<sup>7</sup>

(ii) As embodied in the Sultan of Turkey

A few months later the editor of Islām-pracārak reproached his readers for not sending a presentation to the Sultan of Turkey, Abdul Hamid (1842-1918) on the occasion of his Silver Jubilee. Neither the rich, of whom there numbered in Bengal several millionaire Nawabs and Zemindars, nor ordinary Moslems had subscribed to send a presentation. This was disgraceful since even the alien Jews and Christians had given gifts. The editor, therefore, suggested to his middle class readers that as a mark of respect to His Excellency at least a subscription to the Damascus-Hedjaj Railway Fund<sup>8</sup> could be sent.<sup>9</sup>

"Whose heart is not inundated with joy," Pracārak asked, waxing eloquent over the Sultan of Turkey, "to learn of the

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6. Osman Pasha, a Turkish general in the Russo-Turkish War, repulsed the first Russian advance at the battle of Pleven in Bulgaria in 1877.
  7. Editorial, Islām-pracārak, 3rd yr., 4th no.; Kārtik. 1306 B.S. (1899).
  8. Infra, p.31.
  9. Editor, 'Mahāmānya Amirul Mumēnin Sultān Gāji Abdul Hāmid Khāner pañca biṃśati bārsik rūpya jubili utsab', Islām-pracārak, 3rd yr. 7th-8th no.; Māgh, 1306 B.S. (1900).

life-story of His Excellency, the Sultan, Emperor of Turkey, and leader of the whole Moslem world, who is the foremost champion of eternal Islam, and who has fully preserved from the hands of infidels Mecca and Medina, indeed the whole of Arabia, which proclaim the glory of our Islamic religion ... Therefore, today this young contributor to Pracāarak presents to its readers a brief account of the life of His Excellency, Sultan Abdul Hamid Khan."<sup>10</sup>

A similar eulogy in verse celebrating the Silver Jubilee of Sultan Abdul Hamid appeared in Pracāarak. It ran:

"Hail to you the Lord of Turkey,

Hail to you the ornament of the Moslem clan,

Hail to you the greatest hero, the greatest of the kings,

May your acclamations fill the world."

"You are the strength of the Moslem clan,

You alone are its pride, and life.

At your command the Moslem world

Its heart's blood can spill."<sup>11</sup>

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10. Syed Fazle Haq, 'Turāṣker Sultān', Pracāarak, 2nd yr., 5th no.; Jyāāiṣṭha, 1307 B.S. (1900).

11. Ismail Hossain Siraji, 'Rāūpya jubili', Pracāarak, 2nd yr., 10th no.; Kārtik, 1307 B.S. (1900).

In its 11th no., 8th vol. the editor of Islām-pracārak reminded his readers of the coming anniversary of the coronation of His Excellency the Sultan of Turkey urging them to observe the occasion in a befitting manner. The day would be celebrated throughout the whole Ottoman empire: everyone was to hold congregational prayers, Māulūd and Wāz<sup>12</sup> meetings; give alms to the poor; decorate mosques and houses with lights and buntings; and pray for a long life for "His Excellency Āmirul Mumēnīn, Khalifātul Muslemīn [Caliph of the Moslem world], Gazi Sultan Abdul Hamid Khan and for the power of his rule to prevail and his kingdom to prosper."

(iii) As symbolised by the Ottoman empire, Islam's pride.

The Bengalee Moslem vernacular Press welcomed any sign of progress and improvement within the Ottoman empire no matter within what sphere it occurred. For example, in 1903 Islām-pracārak interpreted the unprecedented profit declared by the Osmania Bank and the annual dividend of 6½% paid to share-holders as a mark of the Ottoman empire's progress.<sup>13</sup>

12. Māulūd - celebration of the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad; Wāz - religious preaching.

13. Editor, 'Jātiyā o dharmā sambād', Islām-pracārak, 5th yr., 7th-8th no.; Śrābaṇ-Bhādra, 1310 B.S. (1903).

In 1907 Islām-pracāarak drew attention to the introduction of the Japanese system of agriculture in Ottoman territories, interpreting this as another sign of the way in which the Ottoman Government was benefiting from the experience of other countries.<sup>14</sup> The depth of the affection of Bengalee Moslems for the Sultan and his empire can be gauged from an editorial comment in the same journal. Viewed objectively, it would seem that Young Turks,<sup>15</sup> by instigating a military revolt in Macedonia and Albania, had compelled the Sultan to introduce a constitutional form of Government<sup>16</sup> in his country

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14. Editor, 'Jātiyā o dharma sambād', Islām-pracāarak, 8th yr., 2nd no.; Fālgun, 1313 B.S. (1907). This was the first time Turkey had taken note of developments in Japan. And the Bengalee Moslem press, too, gave the news prominence by publishing it under the headline 'National and Religious news' (Jātiyā o dharma sambād). The date is perhaps significant in that Japan had only recently defeated Turkey's arch enemy Russia (1905). This event had a far-reaching and marked effect on Moslems. For, they regarded Russia as the incarnation par excellence of infidel power, whose only aim were to destroy Turkey and crush Islam. So "The press and pulpits of Islam took up an anti-Christian, anti-foreign propaganda with new hopefulness ... 'What heathen Japan had done, could they not do with the help of Allah? - This interest was universal.' (S.G. Wilson, Modern Movements among Moslems, 1916, p.228). This startling demonstration of the military effectiveness of an Asian power also had important repercussions on the current svadeśī movement in Bengal.
15. The Young Turks, a secret revolutionary society, had been agitating ever since the late 1870s for the restoration of the Constitution in Turkey. They demanded the Civil liberties, denied by the Sultan. The movement had, by the turn of the century, gained such strength that in 1908 the Young Turks successfully rebelled, compelling the Sultan to re-introduce the Constitution and to re-convene

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to appease dissatisfied elements. These events were interpreted by Islām-Pracārak's editor, however, as a triumph for the diplomatic and political skill of the Sultan, who by a single proclamation had filled everyone with devotion and extinguished the flames of revolt. Nevertheless, the editor conceded that the "atheistic Young Turks" were "still not satisfied".<sup>17</sup> By comparing them to the champions of Svarāj<sup>18</sup> in India, the editor did, however, attempt to sow in people's minds the suspicion that the ambitions of the Young Turks were too grandiose and unrealistic ever to succeed. He stated, "Like those crazy

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Parliament. In April the following year they crushed a Mullā-inspired uprising and eventually deposed the Sultan himself.

The Young Turk movement was distinctly national, discouraging religious fanaticism. They repudiated Pan-Islamism, and their manifestos even failed to give any particular prominence to Islam.

16. The Sultan, under popular pressure, issued a decree on July 24th, 1908, restoring the Constitution, which he himself had abrogated in 1878.

17. Islām-pracārak appears to have opposed the Young Turks mainly for two reasons. Firstly, it was an article of faith with them to be loyal to the Sultan, who was Caliph of the Moslem world and defender of Islam. Secondly, and as a concomitant to this, since the Young Turk movement was secular and aimed at the attainment of civil rights for all, Moslems, Christians and Jews alike, irrespective of their religions, Islām-pracārak condemned the Young Turks as 'atheists'. Other journals such as Bāsanā, for example, took up a similar position. Infra pp. 35-36.

18. For Islām-pracārak's opposition to Svarāj and Svadeśī agitations see Chapter on Politics.

people in India, who are attempting to set up Svarāj, they desire to establish some kind of republic in Turkey."<sup>19</sup>

In 1909, however, the editor of Bāsanā recorded with regret that 'the glory of Islam' had been devastated by 'atheistic Young Turks' who had deposed the 'all-virtuous Šahin Šāh' (King of Kings) of the Ottoman empire, Sultan Abdul Hamid Khan, under whose ideal rule the empire had made such remarkable progress.<sup>20</sup>

(b) Attitude to other nations determined by their relations with either Turkey itself or Moslems in general.

(i) Russia: arch villain

The Bengalee Moslem vernacular Press seems to have constantly seen Russia as the arch enemy of Islam. In 1877 Mahāmmadi Akhbār stated that Russia had attacked Turkey 'out of greed' and to harm the faith of the Moslems by seizing Mecca, Bāit ul Moqāddes, Medina and Kārbālā.' In 1899 when paying tribute to the memory of Gazi Osman Pasha, Islām-pracāarak did not miss the opportunity of describing him as

19. Editor, 'Jātiya o dharma sambād,' Islām-pracāarak, 8th yr., 11th no.

20. Editor, 'Soltān Abdul Hāmid Khāner prati', Bāsanā, 2nd vol., 2nd no.; Jyāāiṣṭha, 1316 B.S. (1909).

'the crusher of indomitable Russia's arrogance' and 'hero of the battle of Pleven'.<sup>21</sup>

According to Islām-pracāarak in 1903, the Russian emperor was constantly inciting Christians within the Ottoman empire to rebel and also going to war against Turkey on the pretext of protecting Christians from Turkish oppression. This, Islām-pracāarak regarded, as extremely brazen in an emperor "whose own realms seethe like a terrible volcano ... because of his oppressions."<sup>22</sup>

That same year Islām-pracāarak again highlighted Russian injustice in preventing the Amir of Bokhara from going on pilgrimage to Mecca. "The Russian Government is really terribly oppressive and a great enemy to Islam", the journal declared.<sup>23</sup>

And, when discussing events in Tunisia, the editor of Islām-pracāarak could not help observing that "in ruling other nations, the French have outdone the despotic Russian Government,"<sup>24</sup> i.e. the Russian Government was held up as a kind

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21. Supra, p. 19.

22. Reyajuddin Ahmad, 'Turaska, Imland o Rusiyā', Islām-pracāarak, 5th yr., 7th-8th no.; Śrābaṅ-Bhādra, 1310 B.S. (1903)

23. Editor, 'Jātiyā o dharma Saṃbād', Islām-pracāarak, 5th yr., 11th-12th no.; Agrahāyaṅ-Pāṣ, 1310 B.S. (1903).

24. Editor, 'Jātiyā o dharma Saṃbād', Islām-pracāarak, 8th yr., 8th no.; Māgh, 1314 B.S. (1908).

of yardstick of despotism by which to measure the villainy of other non-Moslem powers.

Subsequently Islām-pracāarak again drew attention to Russia's opportunism for benefiting from worsening conditions in Persia. And in regard to Moslems in Russia itself, the editor observed in the same article that they were "vigorously advancing towards progress despite being under the despotic and terribly tyrannical Russian Government."<sup>25</sup>

(ii) France: nearly as bad

In 1908 the editor of Islām-pracāarak ridiculed the professed belief of France in Equality and Republicanism. The French had now by fair means or foul established their ascendancy in Tunisia which was once part of the Ottoman empire. Its whole population was Moslem and some years earlier a large amount of money had been earmarked for education by the Tunisian Government. The money had, however, been spent wholly on French national projects. The French authorities in Tunis had argued that, once given higher education, Tunisians would wish to participate in the administration of their own country. "Do you not see, readers, how liberal-minded the French are!", The editor of

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25. Editor, 'Jātiyā o dharma Sambād', Islām-pracāarak, 8th yr., 11th no.

Islām-pracāarak ironically exclaimed, and then comparing the colonial attitudes of the French and British concluded that "We, however, prefer British rule to French."<sup>26</sup>

The French were again criticized by the editor of Islām-pracāarak (4th no., 9th volume) for the influence their teachings had exerted on Young Turks. The French, he observed, were "the worst of atheists", and in consequence it was not surprising that Young Turks were "now out to destroy the glory of sacred Islam."<sup>27</sup> The same point was again implied

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26. Editor, 'Jātiyā o dharma sambād', Islām-pracāarak, 8th yr., 8th no.; Māgh, 1314 B.S. (1908).  
It may be noticed that Islām-pracāarak had always been loyal to Britain, in spite of Britain's being the ruling 'infidel' Christian power. The reasons for this were: firstly, the journal was merely reflecting the general attitude of the newly-rising section of the Moslem community, who found it profitable to cooperate with the Government; secondly, patronage for Islām-pracāarak came mostly from the landed gentry and the well-to-do professional classes whose interests were much dependent on Government-favour; thirdly, loyalty to the British was felt to be the most effective safeguard Moslems had in contending with Hindu ascendancy and anti-Moslem animosity in such spheres as trade, commerce, employment and education; and finally, Islām-pracāarak feared that the current anti-Government, political agitations were tinged with Hindu extremism and, if successful, would greatly harm Moslems. Consequently, it is not surprising to find the journal on some occasions behaving not merely as a loyal agent, but also as a sycophant.
27. Editor, 'Musalmān rājya o sāmrajya samūhe bhīṣaṇ bīplab', Islām-pracāarak, 9th yr., 4th no.

in a criticism of the type of Parliamentary Constitutional government likely to be instituted in Turkey and Persia, outlined in the same article. According to the editor, constitutional government as practised in Europe and specially in France, "from which the Christian religion, or anything bearing the name of religion, has been eternally banished", would be completely disastrous for Islam.

In short, it would seem that in the eyes of Islām-pracāarak France's professed belief in equality and republicanism required qualification: the French regarded equality and the franchise as things to be enjoyed by Frenchmen alone, and not by other nations subject to French rule. Furthermore, Islām-pracāarak regarded the secular form of government practised in Europe, and specially in France, as diametrically opposed to Islamic principles. For, in the Ottoman empire, which Islām-pracāarak regarded as the ideal State, temporal and spiritual power resided in one and the same person, namely the Caliph; whereas in France the power of the Church was restricted to spiritual matters and even there appeared to Islām-pracāarak to be ineffective.<sup>28</sup>

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28. Obviously Islām-pracāarak, which had continuously advocated religion as the sole basis of ethical and political life, would not favour a secular constitution.

(iii) Britain: the best of a bad lot

In the closing years of the 19th century and the first decade of the 20th Bengalee Moslems were, on the whole, bound in loyalty to the British. And so any criticism of the British during that period was mainly constructive in that Bengalee Moslems hoped that Britain would be open to persuasion; and therefore on the whole they tended, where possible, to praise the British;<sup>29</sup> as, for example, in 1903, when the editor of Islam-pracārak observed that in the British domains the kind of oppression exercised upon the Amir of Bokhara by the Russians, who had prevented him from going on to pilgrimage, was extremely unlikely to occur.<sup>30</sup> And in 1908, when that same editor was comparing the despotism of the French and Russians, he concluded that British rule was preferable.<sup>31</sup>

This does not mean, however, that no criticism of Britain was ever uttered. In 1903, for example, Islām-pracārak highlighted the inconsistency in Britain's behaviour towards:

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29. See also chapter on Politics.

30. "There is no danger of this kind of treatment in the British domains." - Editor, 'Jātiya o dharma sambād', Islām-pracārak, 5th yr., 11th-12th no.; 1310 B.S. (1903).

31. Supra pp. 26-27.

Turkey. In the Crimean War (1854) Britons and Turks had fought side by side against the Russians. Yet, "when Russia unjustly attacked Turkey in 1877-78," Britain "merely stood there and watched..." Indeed later at the Treaty of Berlin (1878) "she was even one of the chief agents in the dismemberment of Turkey, despite the fact that shortly before that war Britain had received from her friend Turkey the beautiful, fertile and useful island of Cyprus."<sup>32</sup>

Islām-pracārak was also dissatisfied with British policy towards Egypt and Kuwait. Nevertheless, its outlook was constructive. It urged Britain to ally itself with Turkey so as to negate Russian influence in the Persian gulf; to encourage Persia to withdraw herself from Russia's sphere of influence; and in conjunction with Afghanistan to safeguard the frontiers of India against Russian designs. The article indeed ends with high praise for the Emperor-King, Edward VII, His Prime Minister, Mr. Balfour, and His

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32. Reyajuddin Ahmad, 'Turaska, Inland o Rusiyā,' Islām-pracārak 5th yr., 7th-8th no.; Śrāban-Bhādra, 1310 B.S. (1903). This refers to Turkey's defensive alliance with Britain, signed on June 4th, 1878, whereby the former was obliged to lease to the latter the island of Cyprus.

"very brilliant Colonial Secretary, Mr. Chamberlain".

"By establishing itself in the affections of the 7 crores of Indian Moslems and 40 crores of Moslems scattered throughout the world" Britain would "gain ascendancy ... and become a power second to none."<sup>33</sup>

(c) The Damascus-Hedjaj Railway: a barometer of pro-Moslem sympathies

Subscription to the Damascus-Hedjaj Railway Fund<sup>34</sup> seems to have constituted a means of showing respect for His Excellency the Amirul Mumenin, the Sultan of Turkey. In 1900 Islām-pracārak's editor urged Bengalee Moslems to make such a subscription on the occasion of the Sultan's Silver Jubilee.<sup>35</sup> In 1903 that same editor recorded that a resident of Tās Lijāh in the Ottoman empire, Haji Sabet Effendi, had contributed £1,000 (Rs.1 5000) to the Fund, and wondered whether Indian Moslems would not follow his example.<sup>36</sup> A few months later the editor reported

33. Ibid.

34. The Fund was organised in India circa 1900. Its aim was to help finance the 500-mile, Damascus-Hedjaj Railway project, promoted by the Caliph Sultan Abdul Hamid to link Moslem holy places. Indian Moslems, therefore, responded favourably. In Bengal the initiative in raising the Fund was taken by Islām-pracārak.

35. See p.19.

36. Editor, 'Jātiyā o dharma sambād', Islām-pracārak, 5th yr., 7th-8th no.; Sraban-Bhādra, 1310 B.S. (1903)

that a medal of the first order had been conferred upon a German doctor for generously subscribing to the Fund by His Excellency the Sultan. "O Moslem brothers", the editor urged, "learn from this non-Moslem how to behave well."<sup>37</sup>

The following year Islām-pracāarak indicated that the path to be followed by the Hedjaj Railway was the same as that by which the Prophet used to visit Syria and by which Hazrat Ibrahim (Prophet Abraham) took his son, Hazrat Ismael, from Canaan to Mecca. "Consequently, pilgrims using this sacred path will undoubtedly earn boundless merit and glory. For Moslems there is no more sacred path in the world than this one."<sup>38</sup>

(d) Attitudes to Christians and Jews within the Ottoman empire.

The presence of Christians and Jews within the Ottoman empire was to some extent a source of anxiety and a liability. Christians were, however, occasionally cited as

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37. Editor, 'Jātiyā o dharma sambād,' Islām-pracāarak, 5th yr., 11th-12th no.; Agrahāyan-Pāuṣ, 1310 B.S. (1903).  
 38. Editor, 'Jātiyā o dharma sambād', Islām-pracāarak, 6th yr., 1st-2nd no.; Bâisākh-Jyāiṣṭha, 1311 B.S. (1904).

showing marks of respect to the Sultan or making gifts to his troops and so forth by Bengalee Moslem editors, who urged their readers - and other non-Moslems also - to do likewise. The editor of Islām-pracāarak, for example, mentioned them in regard to the Silver Jubilee of Sultan Abdul Hamid II, when Bengalee Moslems had so far failed to make a presentation.<sup>39</sup> And subsequently in 1903 the editor reported the gift of 216 expensive winter uniforms to Ottoman troops arranged by a Christian subject. This gift enabled Islām-pracāarak's editor to cite it as a piece of propaganda showing the loyalty of genuine Christians to Ottoman rule. "Look, you anti-Turkish, petty-minded, hypocritical, Christian dogs," he declared, "in the eyes of devils like you everything is the wrong way round."<sup>40</sup> Presumably, what the editor had in mind was that some Christian subjects were incited to rebel against the Ottoman Government by Russian agents,<sup>41</sup> which facilitated a

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39. Supra, p. 19

40. Editor, 'Jātiyā o dharma sambād', Islām-pracāarak, 5th yr., 11th-12th no.; Agrahāyan-Pāṣ, 1310 B.S. (1903).

41. "Russian agents are constantly inciting the Christian subjects of the Turkish empire against their Government. Therefore the fires of revolt are always burning there." Reyajuddin Ahmad, Turāṣha, Iṃland o Rusiyā', Islām-pracāarak, 5th yr., 7th-8th no., 1310 B.S. (1903).

pretext for Russian hostilities. This presumably explains the abusive vocative "Christian dogs."

Reading between the lines of some reports, however, it would seem that Christians were not always happy under Ottoman rule. For example, in its 11th no., 8th volume, Islām-pracāarak reported that the Christian community was also said to be delighted that a Parliament was to be established in Constantinople.<sup>42</sup> This was when Sultan Abdul Hamid II was making constitutional concessions in 1908 after the revolt by the army in Macedonia and Albania incited by Young Turks.

After the Sultan had been deposed in 1909 it was reported by Islām-pracāarak that non-Moslems such as Christians and Jews were to enjoy the same privileges as Moslems<sup>43</sup> as members of the same "'Ottoman nation'. Non-Moslems have never been granted equal rights with Moslems in a Moslem State; Moslems have always retained some special privileges ... But the present Turkish administration has now sacrificed even those special privileges beneath the feet of the Christians."<sup>44</sup>

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42. Editor, 'Jātiyā o dharmā sambād', Islām-pracāarak, 8th yr., 11th no.

43. The Constitution, restored as a result of the revolution by Young Turks, granted of all religious persuasions, Moslems, Christians and Jews alike, equality before the Law.

44. Editor, 'Musalmān rājya o sāmrajya samūhe bhīṣaṇ bīplab', Islām-pracāarak, 9th yr., 4th no.

One presumes that it was this state of inequality which had until then rendered non-Moslems such as Christians and Jews a potential source of discontent and disruption within the empire.<sup>45</sup>

(e) The 'atheistic' Young Turks<sup>46</sup>

Quoting a despatch by the London Times correspondent in Constantinople, the editor of Islām-pracāarak reported in 1907 that the Ottoman Police and Postal departments had seized numerous handbills sent by the rebellious Young Turks. These young men were, the editor stated, devoid of religious knowledge and corrupted by perverted Western education. They, therefore, "bring fresh allegations against His Excellency the Amirul Mumenin every day."<sup>47</sup>

Later he published reports on the revolt in the province of Macedonia organised by Young Turks who desired "to establish some kind of republic for Turkey."<sup>48</sup> And in 1909 the editor of Bāsanā reported with regret the fact that

45. It is perhaps curious to observe now that Islām-pracāarak on the one hand criticised the French for their discrimination against Tunisians whilst at the same time favouring discrimination within the Ottoman empire.

46. Supra, p.22 f.n.15.

47. Editor, 'Jātiyā o dharma sambād', Islām-pracāarak, 8th yr., 2nd no.; Fālgun, 1313 B.S. (1907).

48. Editor, 'Jātiyā o dharma sambād', Islām-pracāarak, 8th yr., 11th no.

the "atheistic Young Turks" had deposed Sultan Abdul Hamid and "destroyed the glory of Islam".<sup>49</sup>

## II

### Deposal of the Sultan of Turkey by Young Turks:

#### Bengalee Moslem Anguish.

##### (i) These developments deplored: 1909

✓ In its 4th number, 9th volume Islām-pracārak reported upon the aftermath of the 'terrible' revolution in Turkey. "The highly-talented and universally-respected" Sultan Abdul Hamid had been deposed, his property and possessions confiscated, and his palace opened to the sight-seeing general public. He himself had been pensioned off. His grief was, however, "nothing compared to the grief and anguish he has experienced at seeing Islam humiliated by the cruel, vile conduct of the Western-educated, atheistic Young Turks." Numerous Ulemā<sup>50</sup>, scholars, newspaper editors, army officers, and secret service men had been lynched. Leading ministers, Pāshās,<sup>51</sup> and Ulemā had been exiled.

49. Editor, 'Saltān Abdul Hāmīd Khāner prati', Bāsanā, 2nd vol., 2nd no.; Jyāāiṣṭha, 1316 B.S. (1909).

50. Ulemā - pl. of Alim, 'one who knows', 'learned doctors of Muslim society.'

51. Pāshā - Turkish aristocrat or high official.

"Even the terrible, despotic Russian Government has been out-done by the present military Government of Turkey, who claim to be the representatives of the people. What connection can there be between such an outrageous administration and the general public? Do the general public approve of such a cruel, oppressive Government?"

Apart from the violence and oppression, the chief thing that seems to have upset Islām-pracāarak was the fact that Turkey had ceased to be an Islamic state. Subjects of all religious persuasions had all been granted equal status as members of the Ottoman nation. The secular - or in the eyes of Islām-pracāarak the 'atheistic' - outlook of the Young Turks was thus undermining the very foundations of Islam.<sup>52</sup>

The same article of Islām-pracāarak also made perfectly clear that Parliamentary Government, as practised in Europe and as about to be practised in Turkey and Persia,<sup>53</sup> was "not suited to all countries in all times. Moslems have, above all, to pay special regard to religion .... This

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52. Editor, 'Musalmān rājya o sāmrajya samūhe bhīṣaṇa bīplab', Islām-pracāarak, 9th yr., 4th no.

53. The agitations for parliamentary and constitutional government in Persia succeeded in July, 1909, when the ruling Shah was deposed by revolutionaries.

type of Government [Parliamentary Government] is not approved by the Qurān, nor by Islam and consequently, not by all-merciful Āllāh either."<sup>54</sup>

(ii) Caliph should be both the temporal and spiritual Head of State: 1923<sup>55</sup>

According to the editor of Choltān in 1923, there could be no dichotomy between Church and State. The editor had no objection to a democratic system of government, such as was reported to be about to be instituted in Turkey.<sup>56</sup> But the system would, if it were to be approved by the Sariyat (Canonical Law of Islam), have to approximate to that which prevailed in the days of Kholāfaye Rāsedīn.<sup>57</sup> The editor's proposal was that: "In accordance with the democratic system, there would be a Parliament together

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54. Editor, 'Musalmān rājya o sāmrajya samthe bhīṣaṇ bipla b', Islām-pracārak, 9th yr., 4th no.
55. The Caliphate question came to prominence once more in the early 1920s, though on this latter occasion with even greater vigour, since the issue gained support throughout India. In Bengal it was championed chiefly by Choltān. The Khilāfat movement, as it was then known, was no longer merely religious: it was strongly political and anti-British in character, though ostensibly Choltān was campaigning for both political and religious objectives.
56. This refers to the political events in Turkey, which culminated in the proclamation of a Republic (Oct. 29, 1923) and the abolition of Turkish Sultanate.
57. The Arabic term is Al-khulafā'u'R-Rāsidūn, meaning 'the well-directed Khalifās', a title given to the first four Caliphs of Islam, Abu Bakr, Umar, Usman and Ali.

with a Cabinet responsible to it. And the Caliph himself would be the President of that grand Assembly. His tenure of office could be fixed as in France and America. We can see no impediment to this from the religious point of view. But if the Caliph is to be seated in a completely separate place like the Pope or the Lāmā<sup>58</sup> without any control over Government, then the prestige of neither the Caliph nor the Caliphate will be preserved."<sup>59</sup>

That the Moslem Press was, in commenting upon the events in Turkey in 1923, facing a dilemma, is revealed in the Press itself. Pro-Khilāfat Moslems themselves were, in collaboration with Congress and alongside their Khilāfat movement, struggling to institute Śvarāj - i.e. Self-Government in India. That is to say though committed to obtaining some form of democratic Government for India, they, nevertheless, wished to see the Caliph remain both the spiritual and temporal Head of Turkey. The election of Mustafa Kemal Pasha as President of the Turkish Republic (on October 30, 1923), therefore disappointed Choltān, the organ of the Khilāfat movement. It declared despairingly: "According

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58. Lāmā - Buddhist priest in Tibet.

59. Editor, 'Turaske ganatantra', Choltān, 8th yr., 22nd no.; 25th Aśvin, 1330 B.S. (1923).

to the Constitution he [Mustafa Kemal] is empowered to select a Prime Minister and with his help a cabinet. If the news we have received about the way in which Turkish democracy has been established is correct, then, even though we strongly support democratic systems of government, we feel no pleasure in the establishment of this one. On the contrary, we fear that various forms of harm will emanate from it ... The Caliph has now become a mere figure-head without any power whatsoever, like the Pope in Rome or the abbot of Tārakeśvar.<sup>60</sup> The basis of the Khilāfat movement, which we initiated in India, has now completely disappeared."<sup>61</sup>

### III

#### 1924 Onwards

##### (a) Changed attitude towards Britain<sup>62</sup>

##### (i) Britain and Iraq

The changed attitude on the part of the Bengalee Moslem

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60. Tārakeśvar - a holy place of Hindus, in Hooghly, West Bengal, is famous for its temple.
61. Editor, 'Turaske sādharāntantra', Cheltān, 8th yr., 24th no.; 16th Kārtik, 1330 B.S. (1923).
62. The change in Bengalee Moslem attitudes towards Britain was most pronounced from the start of the 1920s, yet the actual process of change had commenced almost a decade earlier, in 1911 to be precise, when the annulment of the partition of Bengal, regarded by Moslems as a

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Press towards Britain, as a result of the campaign for Svarāj in India, is apparent in an editorial comment in Saogāt in 1928, where a reference is made to the placing of Amir Faisal on the throne of Iraq by the British in order to facilitate their exploitation of that land. Misled by the British, Iraqi Arabs were, like the British themselves, becoming hostile to Sultan Ibn Saud of Hedjaj. The British army had placed a base on the Hedjaj-Iraq frontier. This constituted a threat to the sovereignty of Hedjaj. The Sultan had therefore protested against it and war between him and Britain was now likely. The Iraqis, who were falling in with British designs, would, however, Saogāt's

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continued from previous page ....

Government breach of faith towards them, took place. Shortly after this came the Balkan War and Britain's part in it appeared to Moslems to be a further betrayal of their interests. The most hurtful blow to Moslem sensibilities, however, was Britain's hostilities against Turkey during the First World War. Fearing violent displays of pro-Turkish sympathies from its Moslem subjects the India Government gaoled many of their leaders. Indian Moslems were, however, given assurances that upon the cessation of hostilities Turkish interests would not be harmed. In fact, however, the very reverse happened. The Turkish empire was dismembered. Indian Moslems felt justifiably grieved by this further instance of Britain's perfidy. Thus during the period of about ten years beginning from 1911 successive 'betrayals' and 'deceptions' by Britain alienated Bengalee Moslem loyalties and with the emergence of the Khilāfat and Non-Cooperation movements the popular Moslem press, a few orthodox journals excluded, swung into the attack on Britain regarding Indian political affairs and also regarding Britain's Middle-Eastern policies.

editor maintained, realise their mistake as soon as they became conscious of their own position: "The call of freedom will enliven their hearts, - and that day is not far off." Thus Britain was now seen as an exploiter meddling in Middle Eastern affairs for the sake of its own interests.<sup>63</sup>

(ii) A warning to Britain not to interfere in Afghanistan

King Amanullah of Afghanistan was deposed in 1929 as a result of a revolt in his country. The India Government was refusing to divulge information about it. Despite this lack of information, however, the editor of Sāptāhik Saogāt warned the India Government, on behalf of the people of India, and especially of the Moslem community, that no interference on their part either directly or indirectly, in the affairs of Afghanistan would be tolerated. If despite these warnings the India Government did anything against King Amanullah, a mass agitation would be launched throughout India.<sup>64</sup> "We hope that Lord Irwin's government

63. Editor, 'Hejāj o Irāk', Saogāt, 6th yr., 2nd no.; Bhādra, 1335 B.S. (1928)

64. Sāptāhik Saogāt, being a liberal, nationalist organ, favoured King Amanullah's progressive reforms in Afghanistan. So he naturally gained the journal's sympathies, when he was deposed by reactionaries.

will not deliberately invite this danger upon themselves", Sāptāhik Saogāt declared.<sup>65</sup>

(iii) British despotism in Egypt

Sāptāhik Saogāt in the same issue used strong language in describing the 'despotism' of the 'arrogant' British imperialists in Egypt. The Wafd Party<sup>66</sup> was campaigning for independence and the British were doing all in their power to smash the Party. "What will be the outcome of such an oppressive measure?" Sāptāhik Saogāt's editor asked. "Once patriotism has become firmly rooted in a nation's heart it can not be eradicated ... Yet the arrogant imperialists ... fail to realise that their oppression, accumulated over the ages, is hanging poised above their own heads like the sword of Damocles. They are too blind to see it."<sup>67</sup>

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65. Editor, 'Afgānistān', Sāptāhik Saogāt, 1st yr.; 36th no., 11th Māgh, 1335 B.S. (1929).

66. Wafd i.e. Wafd al-Misri (meaning Egyptian Delegation) was a political movement launched in Egypt immediately after the First World War. Its aim, in the beginning, was to send a delegation to present the demands of the Egyptian people to the British Government and to the Paris Peace Conference (1919). The Party, however, later under the leadership of Zaglul Pasha, organised a country-wide nationalist movement.

67. Editor, 'Mišare candanīti', Sāptāhik Saogāt, 1st yr., 36th no., 11th Māgh, 1335 B.S. (1929).

(iv) Differences between British and Iraqis

The difference of opinion predicted by Saogāt's editor in its 2nd issue, 1928, seems to have materialised a few months later. For Sāptāhik Saogāt then reported upon a serious difference of opinion that had arisen between the British and Iraqi Governments over the defence of Iraq. "The British say that the Iraqis are still minors and unable to defend themselves from enemy attack. On the other hand the Iraqis feel capable of defending their own country. No compromise between these conflicting positions is feasible. And so the Iraqi cabinet has had to resign. In short, events in Iraq are about to follow the same course as in Egypt .... No matter how much lip-service the British may pay to their own claims of universal benevolence, a fiendish hunger of petty self-interest constantly blazes within them. They are, therefore, never prepared to acknowledge the competence of subject-nations. But how much longer can things go on like this?"<sup>68</sup> (Italics mine).

68. Editor, Irakīder Nābālakatva, ibid.

This comment probably represents what the editor would like to have said in regard to the current political situation in India. It may be remembered that at this time the Simon Commission was visiting India. One of the objections to it raised in informed Indian circles was that it contained no Indian members. This was taken as an indication of the 'minority' status of Indians; i.e. the fact that like minors they were regarded as unfit to judge for themselves the kind of administrative arrangements best suited to govern their country.

(b) Developments in Hedjaj and Afghanistan(i) Hedjaj

After the first World War the Turkish empire was dismembered and puppet regimes were established in various places in the Middle East.<sup>69</sup> There was presumably popular discontent against these regimes which were subservient to Christian powers.

Trouble occurred in Hedjaj, and in 1925, when British military support was withdrawn, the puppet King, Sharif Hussain, was defeated by Ibn Saud, the Wahābi Amir of Nezd.<sup>70</sup> King Hussain had to abdicate. Saud established his control in Hedjaj. Sariyat, an anti-Wahābi organ, was extremely critical of the manner in which Saud came to power. He had exercised "inhuman tyranny and brutality." He seized Mecca, devastated the Prophet's birth place together with many shrines

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69. "Through the influence of the British Sharif Hussain became King of Hedjaj in 1916 and his sons, the Amir Feisal and the Amir Abdullah became sovereigns of Iraq and Trans-jordania respectively in 1921. It was hoped that the family would acquire great prestige as guardians of the Holy Cities of Mecca, Medina and Baghdad and that Hussain might perhaps supersede the Sultan [of Turkey] as Caliph of the Moslem World. As a matter of fact, this hope has not been realised." - W.R.Smith, Nationalism and Reforms in India, 1938, p.309.

70. The reference here is to the Amir of Nezd's support for Wahabism. The movement, named after its founder Ibn Abd al-Wahab (1703-'87), began in Arabia with a view to reforming Islam by eliminating the prevalent corruptions and superstitions. It was intended that Islam should be restored to its original purity and order. In India the movement was started by Syed Ahmad Bareilvi (1782-1831) and turned into a religio-political Holy War against the Sikhs and the British. The movement continued till 1870s.

of the Sāhābā (companion of the Prophet) and many holy places. He also took Medina and destroyed the shrine of Hazrat Hāmzā [uncle of the Prophet] and other holy places. Sariyat described Ibn Saud as 'Wahābī Sardār' (Wahabi Leader)<sup>71</sup> and as "the tyrannical arch-enemy of the 'Sunnat Jāmāyet'. " Apparently Wahābī supporters and Khālāfat-newspapers in Bengal had been loudly proclaiming Ibn Saud as 'Sultān' ('Mahomedan Sovereign') and 'Gāzī' ('a hero, a warrior: one who fights in the cause of Islam'.) But, Sariyat declared, it was in no way consonant with Islam to confer upon Ibn Saud the title of 'Gāzī' or 'Sultān'.<sup>72</sup> Sariyat appears to have been pro-British and therefore to have favoured the rule of Sharif Hossain.

Saogāt, however, was strongly anti-British and in 1928 took a completely opposite view to that expressed by Sariyat. Saogāt described Sharif Hossain of Hedjaj as "the obedient

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71. Sunnat Jāmāyet appears to be an abbreviation of the Arabic term, Ahl al-Sunna wa-al-Jamā'a (i.e. the people of the Sunna and of the Community), which was traditionally used to signify the Moslem community at large, with the exception of the Shiās and Khārejites. The Wahābis, though originally the members of the 'Sunnat Jāmāyet', are here designated as not belonging to the Community.
72. Editor, 'Hejāj Samasyā', Sariyat, 2nd yr., 7th no.; Kārtik, 1332 B.S. (1925).

servant of the Christian powers", and alleged that he had tyrannised and oppressed the holy land of Hedjaj. Saogāt, therefore, welcomed his expulsion "by the vigorous might of Ibn Saud of Nezd." Ibn Saud had "cleared away the superstitions of the centuries" and "bathed the Arab nation in a sacred stream of pure Islam." He was gradually modernising the country and was attempting "to make Hedjaj renowned throughout the world as a State powerful and free in all respects."<sup>73</sup>

It is fairly clear that in commenting upon events in other Moslem countries Bengalee Moslem editors were really formulating their views on the way in which they would like Bengalee Moslem society to develop. Some, like Šariyat, tended to be conservative in religious matters and loyal to the British in political matters. Others, like Saogāt, welcomed reform in religious matters coupled with the seizing and exercising of power by Indians, Hindu and Moslem alike.

Saogāt, therefore, saw in Ibn Saud an ideal ruler, who

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73. Editor, 'Hejāj o Irāk', Saogāt, 6th yr., 2nd no.; Bhādra, 1335 B.S. (1928).

had crushed fanaticism, supersititon and sectarian dissent; abolished the worship of shrines; terminated bribery, corruption, banditry and theft; facilitated the visiting of the Kābā (principal shrine of Moslems situated in Mecca); controlled the wild Bedouins; and by diplomacy established friendly treaties with surrounding kingdoms. His rule, therefore, constituted "a glorious chapter in Arab history."<sup>74</sup>

(ii) Afghanistān

In a summary of events in the Moslem world published two decades earlier, the editor of Islām-pracāarak had reported that Afghanistan was calm and that its wise ruler was making determined efforts to improve conditions within his regime. He had also in various ways punished all those Afghan subjects who had taken up arms against the British in the Frontier War.<sup>75</sup> This report is typical of the pro-British attitudes prevailing in Bengalee Moslem Society in the first decade of the 20th century.

In 1928 Māsik Mohāmmadi drew attention to the various reforms being made in Afghanistan by its enlightened ruler

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74. Editor, 'Muslim Jāhān', Saogāt, 7th yr., 8th no.; Cāitra, 1336 B.S. (1930).

75. Editor, 'Jātiyā o dharma saṁbād', Islām-pracāarak, 8th yr., 11th no.

Amir Amanullah who had abandoned "all imperial splendour" and was mixing with Afghan citizens in ordinary clothes like one of them. This was a symbolic indication of his belief "in the genuine power of the people"; i.e. in democracy. In his newly-established capital, Dār-ul-Amān, he had set up new institutions to teach European medicine and new hospitals on European scientific lines. Separate arrangements had been made for clinics for women; and colleges had been founded to train Afghan and Turkish women as nurses. Similar institutions had also been established in the cities of Herat and Ghazni.<sup>76</sup>

Apparently all these reforms and modifications were introduced too rapidly for orthodox Moslems in Afghanistan to tolerate. Within a few months of the eulogistic editorial comment outlined above, Amanullah was deposed by a revolt (January, 1929) led by fanatic Mullās. The precise nature of the revolt was not known to the Bengali Moslem press at that time, and it would seem from a comment by the editor of Sāptāhik Saogāt that he may have suspected some kind of British-inspired, reactionary movement against

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76. Editor, 'Sambādikā', Māsik Mohāmmadī, 1st yr., 12th no., Āsvin, 1335 B.S. (1928).

King Amanullah.<sup>77</sup> He wrote, "The affairs of Afghanistan are now not a matter of concern to Moslems alone, they have attracted the attention and concern of all freedom-loving Indians. We should like to know why the India government refuses to divulge any information about this? ... However, whatever the present situation and mystery behind the Afghan revolt might be, we warn the India Government, on behalf of the people of India, and especially on behalf of the Moslem community, that any interference on their part, either directly or indirectly, in the affairs of Afghanistan, will not be tolerated by the people of this country ... If despite these warnings the India government does anything against Bādsāh Amanullah, either directly or indirectly, then a mass agitation will be launched from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin."<sup>78</sup>

It seems to us fairly clear that in taking this stance the editor of Sāptāhik Saogāt is really not so much concerned

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77. In fact, relations between King Amanullah and the British had been distinctly unfriendly, ever since he ascended the throne in 1919. Consequently, when in 1929, he was deposed it was generally suspected that British diplomats might have had a hand in engineering the revolt against him.

78. Editor, 'Afgānistān', Sāptāhik Saogāt, 1st yr., 36th no.; 11th Māgh, 1335 B.S. (1929).

with Afghanistan as with finding some symbol on which to focus Bengalee Moslem attention so as to concentrate their hostility against the British. Possibly he was searching for something to replace the now obsolete Khilāfat movement so as to bring Moslems once more in vigorous collaboration with the independence movement throughout India.

#### IV

#### World-wide Moslem sympathies throughout the period

Besides commenting upon political events in the Moslem world, the vernacular Moslem press also heralded any new development in Moslem proselytization. In 1904, for example, Islām-pracārak reported on the conversion of 30 Japanese merchants from Buddhism to Islam, and also upon the request of Moslems in Shanghai, China, to Sheikh Abdullah William, the Sheikh-ul-Islam of Great Britain and Ireland, to write a number of Islamic tracts. These tracts would then be translated into Japanese at Shanghai, published and distributed amongst Buddhists in Japan. The editor concluded, "Alas, if a competent missionary had gone to Japan and dedicated himself to propagating sacred Islam, swarms and swarms of Japanese would undoubtedly have come beneath the

peaceful sacred shade of Islam and been glorified."<sup>79</sup>

A couple of years later Islām-pracāarak again reported that the Moslems in China were flourishing and seemed to possess a monopoly of industry and commerce. In addition to this they were also progressing vigorously in education to the 'alarm of Christian missionaries in China.'<sup>80</sup>

In 1924 Choltān, commenting on the need to cultivate history, pointed out that Moslems throughout the world could participate in, and enjoy, Moslem achievements in Arabia, India and China. "In the realm of thought, religion and duty, they are bound together like the innumerable roots of a single plant."<sup>81</sup>

Saogāt in 1928 joyfully reported upon the failures of Christian missionaries to convert Moslems in the Philippine islands. In the island of Mindanao, though educationally backward, Moslems were clinging to Islam, despite the temptations offered by Christians. Moslems in the mountainous region of Lanao had similarly ignored Christian

79. Editor, 'Jātiyā o dharma saṃbād', Islām-pracāarak, 6th yr., 3rd no.; Aṣārḥ, 1311 B.S. (1904).

80. Editor, 'Jātiyā o dharma saṃbād', Islām-pracāarak, 8th yr., 11th no.

Opposition to Christian missionaries was the most frequently avowed point of Islam-pracāarak's policy. The journal, therefore, never failed to avail itself of each and every opportunity of attacking them that was presented to it.

81. 'Ītiḥās carcār ābaśyakatā', Choltān, 8th yr., 35th no.; 4th Māgh, 1330 B.S. (1924).

It may be pointed out that, though, as here, Choltān frequently asserted its firm faith in Pan-Islamism, in regard to domestic politics it nevertheless advocated nationalism.

blandishments. The 'Moros' chiefs had kept intact the glory of Islam and of universal Islamic brotherhood. Christians were refusing to educate Moslems, unless they embraced Christianity. But, Saogāt's editor commented, Moslems preferred illiteracy to the loss of their religion. He was nevertheless, sanguine that once conversant with the outside world Moslems in the Philippines would quickly arrange to educate themselves.<sup>82</sup>

A contributor to Saogāt in 1926 justified the propensity of many Bengalee Moslems for directing their gaze outside India. These Moslems were often complained against by Hindus intent on building an all-Indian nationhood. Such Hindus complained that Moslems were unconcerned with the welfare of India being more concerned with Arabia, Persia and Turkey whence they claimed to have come.<sup>83</sup> "Though there may apparently be some grounds for thinking like this, nevertheless, there is absolutely no truth in this allegation by Hindu nationalists ... The reason why Indian Moslems express such a keen interest in the joys and sorrows of

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82. Editor, 'Philipāin dviper Muslamān', Saogāt, 6th yr., 4th no.; Kārtik, 1335 B.S. (1928).

83. This belief, indeed, prevailed for quite some time among a certain section of Bengal Moslems. They preferred to insist upon their separate and special identity, by proclaiming an ancestral connection with such countries as Arabia, Persia, Turkey and Afghanistan. For further information see Khondkar Fuzli Rubbi, The Origin of the Musalmans of Bengal, 1895.

Arabia and Turkey is very clear ... The Islamic religion originated in Arabia, and the great Prophet of Islam was born and died there ... The Kābā, which Moslems face when saying their prayers, is also in Arabia ... It is, therefore, extremely natural that Moslems ... should feel deeply concerned about the welfare of Turkey, the temporal seat of the Caliph, and about the Caliph, the preserver of Arabia, whence Islam stems.<sup>84</sup> "...Indian Moslems immediately feel an impulse to help and sympathize with Moslems not only in Arabia and Turkey, but also in Kabul [Afghanistan], Egypt, Persia, Morocco and the Sudan, whenever these lands are in danger. When Britain and Russia established in equal measure their lordship over Persia, Indian Moslems vigorously protested against both of them. Indian Moslems are concerned over Egypt's struggle for independence. Our Moslem leaders in this country are often more eager to help the Turks, who are destitute, homeless and starving, due to Greek oppression, than they are to help those in difficulties at home...."

"...Indian Moslems have failed to establish themselves

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84. In spite of this wishful thinking, the fact remains that the Caliphate in Turkey had already been abolished and Turkey turned into a Republic. The new Turkey that emerged in 1924 no longer pretended to be 'the preserver of Arabia.'

in India. Their own country has turned them into aliens. It is for this reason that their attention is swiftly diverted outside. The anxieties of their frustrated feelings seek peace by clinging to Moslems outside India. They beguile their frustrated spirits with thoughts of the power enjoyed by the Turks and Kābulis [Afghans].

"A person who is himself unfortunate feels pride in the possessions of his relatives .... The Moslems in India are now extremely unfortunate. Partly due to inability and ignorance stemming from past mistakes, and partly due to the impediments and pressures brought to bear upon them by the more advanced conditions of neighbouring communities, they are failing to find a way of expressing themselves ... It seems they cannot find a free and unobstructed path for their lives to flow easily and naturally, and to develop in India. For this reason Indian Moslems involve themselves with the fortunes of Moslems outside India, and express eagerness carefully to keep alive the last glow of Moslem power and glory outside India."<sup>85</sup>

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85. Yakub Ali Choudhury, 'Bhāratīya Musalmān o Svādeśikata', Saogat, 4th yr., 2nd no.; Śrābon, 1333 B.S. (1926)..

## V

The awakening of the whole Moslem world  
heralded.

It is perhaps fitting to end this chapter with a prophetic comment by Saogāt's editor in 1930 heralding the awakening of the whole Moslem world. The first fingers of light of the coming dawn were symbolised in Kemal of Turkey, Reza Shah of Persia, Amanullah and Nadir Khan of Afghanistan and Ahmad Jagu of Albania. Each of these countries had effected the kind of socio-economic and political reforms that Saogāt clearly envisaged as necessary to fit Islam for the modern age: "Amongst the countries under Moslem rule Turkey, Persia, Afghanistan and Albania at present have attracted world notice. Because the rulers of these countries, even at the risk of their own lives, by improving the socio-economic and political affairs of their countries, are attempting to fit their lands for the modern age. Kemal Pasha has succeeded. Though Amanullah failed, Nadir Khan is slowly completing the task which he [Amanullah] began. Reza Shah also is on the way to success. And Ahmad Jagu of the small state of Albania has refashioned his country. It is to be hoped that in the not-too-distant

future the whole Moslem world will newly awaken and give a fitting answer to the oppression of the white nations of Europe."<sup>86</sup>

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86. Editor, 'Muslim Jāhān', Saogāt, 7th yr., 9th-10th no., Bâisākh-Jyaâiṣṭha, 1337 B.S. (1930).

## Chapter II

Politics

As observed in the last chapter the Caliph-Sultan of Turkey was the centre of the sympathies of Bengalée Moslems and until his interests were threatened, their attitude towards the British during the period of our study was one of almost undivided loyalty. In many respects the position of Bengalee Moslems during the half century from 1880 to 1930 was comparable to that of Hindus from 1817 to 1867.<sup>1</sup> These were for each community in their respective periods times of courtship with British rule. At first that rule seemed fundamentally benevolent and just; and collaboration with it, as far as their cultures and religions permitted, seemed mutually advantageous; but gradually disillusionment set in and with it a desire initially to assert their individuality and cultural uniqueness, but eventually to claim for more and more control of their political destinies.

In one important respect, however, the two periods were not comparable; for the Hindu community during the period from 1817 to 1867 there was no rival community with superior western education and greater economic power, that was then groping

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1. The lower limit of this period marks the opening of Hindu College, which was quickly followed by Hindu Bengalee journalism, and the upper limit the formation of Hindu Melā, the first Hindu Nationalist organisation.

towards political consciousness and a greater share in the administration also; but for the Moslem community during the period under review there was such a rival community, the Hindus, the existence of these rivals, whose advancement lent them present ascendancy and potential, future dominance, complicated the Bengalee Moslem position. Rendered cautious by past mistakes, Bengalee Moslem leaders strove during the early part of our period to steer clear of political involvement, consoling themselves with the oft-repeated belief that British rule was fundamentally benevolent and that, once apprised of Moslem grievances, the British would swiftly remedy them. Thus it was that up to 1911, Bengalee Moslems on the whole resolutely and doggedly struggled to remain aloof from politics and repeatedly asserted their loyalty to their British rulers.

The Bengalee Moslem leaders up to 1924 were in the main the Ulemā. For these men Islam was everything; and 'everything' meant the Caliph and their understanding of the Sariyāt. The erstwhile loyalty to the British gradually after 1911 turned, as we have seen, to militancy, and to an uneasy collaboration with Congress, as a result of British hostilities against Turkey and mishandling of the Caliphate question.

After the collapse of the Khilāfat movement in 1924, however, Moslem relations with Congress became on the whole as suspicious and, at times, as spiteful, as they had been before 1911. But

by 1924 Bengalee Moslem society was consciously in a greater state of uncertainty and confusion than it had ever been before. We speak of 'Bengalee Moslems', but, the question is, who were they? Were they really a consciously-united community? Or, were they a conglomeration of disparate groups, whom chance or rejection from other classes and communities had thrown together? Some Bengalee Moslems were western educated and held much in common with educated Bengalee Hindus, from whom they imbibed political attitudes. It was perhaps members of groups such as these that Alim-editors regarded as 'Congressite touts' and 'Hindu-boot-lickers'; for their educational advancement had possibly engendered in them similar political aspirations to their Hindu neighbours with whom they sought to collaborate. It was perhaps to educated Moslems like these that the pro-Congress Choltān most readily appealed. Other Bengalee Moslems were landed gentry and the highly educated and sophisticated Moslem élite who had achieved comparable status with them. These people again had much in common with their Hindu counterparts. They thus hovered between Congress and the Moslem League, believing both to be fundamentally unopposed to British rule, which to them had been, and was continuing to be, fundamentally beneficial. This was the group whose prattle about democracy was later to bring forth a cry to stop blathering about democracy, for their doing so was likely to end only in Bolshevism

amongst the peasants, whose interests they were betraying. The vast majority of Bengalee Moslems were, however, peasants, and of their feelings and aspirations little is actually known. And finally the Ulemā; what was their role to be after Mustafa Kemal had 'pricked the Caliphate bubble?' Where were they to lead the Bengalee Moslems after the goal itself had disappeared?

In brief, all we can say in prelude to our review of Bengalee Moslem political writings during the period of our study is that 1880 to 1930 was a time of increasing Moslem awareness and political participation; during it Bengalee Moslems gained a clearer picture not only of their situation, but also of who they themselves were and what they wanted.

## I

### Pre-1905

In the early stage Moslems were largely apathetic to  
Politics and loyal to the British.

#### (a) Aloofness from Politics.

An editorial in Mihir in 1892 indicated that the journal wished to remain completely aloof from Politics arguing, "how can we, who are devoid of scruples, attack the politics of our Rulers? This would be excessively presumptuous on our part. Whenever any question arises in this country regarding some important or necessary change we shall attempt to publicize clearly the intentions of the Government and shall refrain from

interjecting any opinion of our own."<sup>2</sup>

An article in Hāfej in 1897 argued that though Moslems were now subject to British rule there was no point in lamenting the matter. The contributor was optimistic that, provided Moslems could petition the whole British nation in Britain and inform them of their needs and aspirations, then, no matter how great those needs might be, or how high their aspirations, they could certainly be fulfilled.<sup>3</sup>

(b) Loyalty to the British.

The loyalty of Moslems towards the British is particularly evident from their comments in the press over the Boer War (1899-1902) in South Africa. Mihir o Sudhākar in 1899 was confident that the extra-ordinary military skill of Lord Kitchener (1850-1916) would soon destroy the Boers. "Victory for the British flag", Mihir o Sudhākar declared, "is what we desire".<sup>4</sup> Pracārak in 1900 reiterated the desire for a British victory especially amongst Indians and reported that even though the Indian residents of Natal in South Africa had not been at all well treated by the British,<sup>5</sup> they had

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2. Editor, 'Abhāṣ', Mihir, 1st. yr., 1st. no.; January, 1892.
  3. Sheikh Osman Ali, B.L., 'Kāngres o Musalmān jāti', Hāfej, 1st vol., 2nd no.; February, 1897.
  4. 'Sambād', Mihir o Sudhākar, 8th Pāuṣ, 1306 B.S. (1899).
  5. This refers to the sufferings inflicted upon Indian settlers by the Britishers in South Africa. In order to remedy this Gandhi in 1894 founded the Natal Indian Congress, and subsequently started a resistance (satyāgraha) movement there.

nevertheless volunteered to serve as Medical orderlies on the British side. This was a mark of "the capacity of Indians for supreme self-sacrifice" and also of "their great loyalty to rulers desirous of their well-being".<sup>6</sup> Pracāarak some months later expressed delight in "the display of loyalty by young students at the General Assembly Institution in celebrating the victory achieved in South Africa by our British rulers."<sup>7</sup>

An article in Islām-pracāarak in 1903 indicated the way in which British and Moslem sympathies and interests were interwoven. "A quarter of the Moslems in the world are now subject to the British Government. Wherever the British have penetrated, the Moslems now follow like shadows. Wherever the British rule, the Moslems are their subjects and merchants. Wherever the British command, their most loyal soldiers are Moslem." Islām-pracāarak, therefore, rejoiced over the foundation of the British empire in India,<sup>8</sup> because of the protection it had afforded to Indian Moslems: "we humbly submit that the establishment of the British empire in India was a special mark

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6. 'Dakṣin Afrikār Buyār yuddher bibaran', Pracāarak, 2nd vol., 1st no.; Māgh, 1366 B.S. (1900).
  7. 'Rājar jayé ānanda', Pracāarak, 2nd yr., 7th no.; Srāban, 1307 B.S. (1900).
  8. Identical expressions of rejoicings may also be noted in the compositions of Hindu authors after the British had crushed the Sepoy Mutiny in 1857. Typical examples are Iṣvarchandra Gupta's verses on war (yuddha biṣyāk kabitā).

of divine favour to Moslems. Had not the British assumed the sceptre of India, Moslems would have suffered endlessly at the hands of brigandish Marathas and fiendish Sikhs. Probably in many regions of India Moslems would have ceased to exist. All these reasons render us eternally indebted to the British, and this we state with a hundred thousand, nay with a crore, of voices. So our favouring of British rule is natural and our loyalty to the British Government spontaneous. Should we ever forget the countless kindnesses of the British Government, we should deserve to be described as ingrates."<sup>9</sup>

(c) Tributes to Queen Victoria.

The Moslem loyalty to the British is also evidenced by tributes to Queen Victoria paid after her death<sup>10</sup> (1901).

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9. Reyajuddin Ahmad, 'Turska, İmład o Ruisiyā', Islām-Pracārak, 5th yr., 7th-8th no.; Srāban-Bhādra, 1310 B.S. (1903). This statement in Islām-pracārak favouring loyalty was echoed almost identically by a Moslem political leader (Nawab Viqarul Mulk) in 1907. He said, "The only way for the Moslems to escape this danger [of Hindu dominance] is to help in the continuance of the British rule. If the Muslims are heartily with the British, then that rule is bound to endure. Let the Muslims consider themselves as a British army ready to shed their blood and sacrifice their lives for the British crown." - As quoted in Ram Gopal, Indian Muslims: A Political History, 1959, p.101.
10. The Hindu Press, too, does not fall behind in paying tribute to the memory of the late Queen. It may also be recalled that the Hindu Press and Hindu authors had been full of adoration for Victoria, when she was proclaimed Queen Empress of India (1877). In the exuberance of their expressions of loyalty they adorned the Queen with the epithet, Mahārānī mātā ('the Great Empress Mother').

Islām-pracāarak outlined all the various beneficial projects and institutions advancing the Moslems, which had been launched and founded during Victoria's reign: English Education, Aligarh College,<sup>11</sup> the Aligarh Education Committee, The Añjumān Himāyēt-i-Islām in Lahore,<sup>12</sup> The Nadwātu'l-Ulemā in Lucknow,<sup>13</sup> Moslem news papers, the flowering of Urdu literature, Moslem books and news papers in Bengali and numerous religious revivals. "There could be no end to the writing of the many other beneficial projects, initiated during that period. And so, from all standpoints, the passing of this great Queen will be seen as a great loss to us."<sup>14</sup>

Pracāarak at the time also reported that: "Thanks to the great kindness of the Queen Empress of India, who was like a mother

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11. The Anglo-Muhammadan College at Aligarh established by Sir Syed Ahmad in 1875.
  12. Añjumān Himāyāt-i-Islām was founded in Lahore in 1884. Its chief aims were to promote the cause of Islam and to defend it against anti-Islamic activities. Throughout its long existence, the organisation has been responsible for the establishment of numerous educational and other charitable institutions, and for the publication of valuable literature on Islam.
  13. Nadwātu'l-Ulemā, Lucknow, started in 1894, was primarily a religio-educational body for Moslems. It attempted to bridge the gulf between various groups of Ulemā. Later, it engaged in politics by making religion the basis of political appeal. The poet-scholar Allama Shibli Nomani served as its secretary between 1905 and 1913.
  14. Editorial, Islām-pracāarak, 3rd yr., 11th-12th no.

to us, we backward Indian Moslems were gradually advancing towards progress. It breaks our heart to say that on the evening of Tuesday, the 22nd of January, floating us upon a sea of tears, she departed this life."<sup>15</sup>

(d) Early attitudes towards Congress.

Despite this professed loyalty towards the British, there was, nevertheless, an underlying feeling, occasionally expressed, that the Indians were not being properly treated. Phrases like "subject to others, trampled beneath their feet" and "being regarded, as they were, virtually as slaves" suggest the sense of humiliation which Indians felt under British rule. The problem, as it appeared to one Moslem journal, was: "How can we awaken and guide the British conscience?" The British were regarded as fundamentally benevolent, but blind to Indian grievances. A national association could therefore be instrumental in awakening the British to Indian grievances. Indian National Congress constituted such an association. "The question now is, why have we not joined it?",<sup>16</sup> Hāfej asked in 1897. Hāfej suggested that there were two reasons for the lack of Moslem sympathy towards Congress: one was the fear that Congress was criticising Government policies and

15. Editor, 'Mahārānīr mṛtyu', Pracārak, 2nd yr., 12th no.

16. It may be pointed out that of the 72 delegates attending the first Congress in 1885 only 2 were Moslems, of 431 attending the second there were 33, and of 1,889 present in its 1889 session Moslem delegates numbered only 258. "Between 1885 and 1905 the Moslem delegates formed only 10 per cent. of the total number of Congress delegates" - Matiur Rahman, From Consultation to Confrontation, 1970, p. 4

incurring Government displeasure; and the other was the feeling that any political concessions or job opportunities in Government service gained by Congress would be shared out amongst Hindus alone. Hāfej regarded these attitudes as misguided: "The measures discussed by Congress are not intended to undermine the British Government, but on the contrary to enable British rule to become firmly established, and more beautifully and immaculately managed. Congress never opposes Government".<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, Hāfej argued, none of the recent 25 proposals put forward by Congress were tainted by communal partiality. "So, how can we say that if Congress gains any rights, they will be for Hindus alone?". Hāfej, therefore, urged Moslems to abandon apathy, and ended by reporting that 40 Moslem delegates had in fact attended the recent session of Congress.<sup>18</sup>

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17. In fact the very foundations of the Indian National Congress were laid with the blessings of Viceroy Lord Dufferin (1884-1888); and more significantly it was a retired Civilian Officer, Mr. Allan Octavian Hume, who initiated the movement. He so designed the Congress movement as to act as the most 'efficacious safety valve' in the interests of British rule in India. It may also be noted that Congress in those days was primarily engaged in propagating loyalty to the British Crown. It believed that real good for Indians could come only through cooperating with Government.

18. Sheikh Osman Ali, B.L.; op.cit. It should perhaps be noted that the author of this article in Hāfej in 1897 was a graduate in law. His views may have been representative of a section of the western-educated, but would probably not at this time have been representative of Bengalee Moslem society as a whole.

In 1900 Pracārak reported that the 'Hindu Congress',<sup>19</sup> would hold its next session in Lahore and expressed the hope that this might lessen Hindu-Moslem animosity.<sup>20</sup>

A graduate writing in Naba Nur in 1904 expressed great suspicion of the underlying motives behind Congress.<sup>21</sup> Attempts were being made to persuade Moslems of their brotherhood with Hindus as the twin sons of 'Mother India' and that as such they ought to strive to preserve the Bengalee nation and its language and literature by protesting against Government policies. "Can you not see readers", the graduate contributor asked, "how

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19. It is to be noted that in spite of Pracārak's being a liberal, unorthodox journal devoted to the promotion of Hindu-Moslem harmony, it nevertheless, refers to Congress as 'Hindu'. This apparently reflects how deeply rooted in Moslem minds was the distrust of Congress.
20. 'Kāngres', Pracārak, 2nd yr., 10th no.; Kārtik, 1307 B.S. (1900).
21. Reference may in this context be made to some factual reasons why Moslems in earlier days opposed Congress. "In the first place, the Congress demands for open competition as the basis for state employment and the introduction and extension of representative institutions were thought to be against the interests of the Muslims who were educationally backward, economically impoverished and numerically in a minority over greater part of the country. Secondly, Muslim leaders like Syed Ahmad Khan and Abdul Latif thought that the Muslims were not yet prepared for political activities and that their participation in the Congress movement would create an unfavourable reaction among the rulers of the country. Thirdly, the anti-Muslim activities of some Congress leaders, particularly Tilak, had convinced a large number of Muslims that their interests would suffer in the hands of the Congress." - Matuis' Rahman, op.cit., p.5.

much self-interest, how much trickery and deception, lie in these honeyed words?"<sup>22</sup>

## II

1905-1919

Moslem Press still urging Moslems to remain either aloof from Politics or loyal to British rule.<sup>23</sup>

### (a) Loyalty to the British.

It would seem that even during the Svadeśī movement over the partition of Bengal<sup>^ (1905)</sup> most sections of Moslem society remained firm in their loyalty to British Rule. For example, an article in Islām-Pracārak in 1905 stated that "under British Rule we are undeniably dwelling in great peace and happiness".

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22. Osman Ali, B.L., 'Du mukho', Naba Nur, 2nd yr., 3rd no.; Aṣārah, 1311 B.S. (1904).

About 7 years earlier this self-same author had been pro-Congress and had been urging his co-religionists to join that institution, which, he opined, was bound to benefit them. Thus this subsequent change of attitude may be deemed significant and indeed possibly symptomatic of the English-educated clan of Moslem graduates to whom he belonged. Presumably his change of attitude stemmed from Congress's failure to substantiate its proposed non-communal, impartial character. Meanwhile the rising, English-educated Moslem middle class had gradually been realising that their communal interests would be best served by isolating themselves from Hindu-dominated associations like Congress.

23. According to Valentine Chirol, "never before the Mahomedans of India as a whole identified their interests and their aspirations so closely as at the present day with the consolidation and permanence of British rule". - Indian Unrest, 1910, p.6.; see also Moslem League Resolution in 1906, infra p.75, f.n.42.

The Hindus had already started their agitations, Islām-pracāarak protested "yet our highly-educated Hindu brethren refuse to understand this...Moslems are eternally loyal...[they] have risen against him [the British king] only on religious issues, as, for example, the Mutiny... If the king is unjust, we shall naturally seek to remedy it, but with patience. We shall humbly and politely acquaint him with our needs and grievances; for in British domains our religious freedom is not interfered with".<sup>24</sup>

✓ An article in Islām-pracāarak in its 8th year repeated similar views about the freedom and religious tolerance enjoyed under British Rule: "The special feature of the administration and rule of the benevolent British Government is that it rules all races, whether Hindu, Moslem, Jew or Christian, with impartiality and without discrimination. In exchange for the surrender of our sovereignty, we have acquired from them noble and magnanimous qualities and if we can emulate those great qualities, then subjection to them will be felt to be a source of great joy."<sup>25</sup>

One paper at least, Naba Nūr, in 1905 expressed incredulity

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24. Ebne Ma'az, 'Baṅgabibhāg o svadeśī āndolon', Islām-Pracāarak, 7th yr., 5th no.; September 1905.  
 25. Abdul Haq Choudhury, 'Musalmān sampradāy o tāhār patan', Islām-pracāarak, 8th yr., 11th no.

at the proposal by Lord Curzon<sup>26</sup> to partition Bengal.<sup>27</sup>

According to Naba Nur the proposal had "gained support of no one in this country, neither British nor Bengalee." Nevertheless, Naba Nur remained firm in its faith in British rule. "The hopes of the people of this country rest unshaken on the fair-mindedness and justice of the British people. The inhabitants of East Bengal have therefore despatched a widely-supported petition to the Secretary of State and now await its reply. We have not yet been able to ascertain what the consensus of opinion amongst our Moslem leaders is. In most instances, however, the Moslems of this country have protested against the proposed new provinces, and it is therefore certain that Moslem public opinion opposes their creation."<sup>28</sup> It would seem that Naba Nur was probably mistaken, for very few Moslems appear to have supported the Swadeśī movement in protest against the

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26. Lord Curzon (1859-1925) was Viceroy of India from 1899 to 1905. His tenure as viceroy was marked by such important events as the introduction of Universities Act in 1904 and partition of Bengal in 1905.
27. The scheme to partition Bengal was prepared in 1903, and the decision was promulgated by the Government, of India on July 19, 1905. The new province, 'Eastern Bengal and Assam', included Assam and the three divisions of Chittagong, Dacca and Rajshahi in Eastern and Northern Bengal. It had a population of 31 millions, of whom 18 millions were Moslems and 12 millions Hindus. A Lieutenant-Governor was put in charge of the Province, and Capital fixed at Dacca. Old Bengal received, in addition to the district of Sambalpur, some Uriya states. Its population was 54 millions. Of these 42 millions were Hindus and 9 millions Moslems. - See Govat Fraser, India Under Curzon and After, 1911, pp.376-382.
28. Ekinuddin Ahmad, 'Baṅger angacched', Naba Nur, 3rd yr., 6th no.; Āśvin, 1312 B.S. (1905).

partition of Bengal.<sup>29</sup>

(b) The Svadeśī movement<sup>30</sup> and Congress.

An article in that same number of Naba Nūr in 1905 seems to suggest that there was massive support for the boycott of foreign goods in Bengal and that this would ultimately lead to Bengal's prosperity.<sup>31</sup> Westernised, upper-class Moslem ladies were, therefore, called upon to discard their 'foreign'-made sārīs, bodices, blouses, stockings, lavender water, jewellery and lady's shoes, and use indigenous products instead.<sup>32</sup>

Nevertheless, there seems to have been strong distaste

29. See A.R.Mallick, 'The Muslims and the Partition of Bengal', A History of the Freedom Movement, Vol.III, pt.I, 1961, and Khalid B.Sayeed, The Political System of Pakistan, 1967, p.19.

30. The Svadeśī (lit. 'of one's own country') movement, primarily an agitation for the strengthening of indigenous trade and industry, was the driving force behind anti-partition agitations (1905-11) in Bengal. Nonetheless 'it was essentially a movement of Hindu revival'. - For details see J.N.Farquhar, Modern Religious Movements in India, 1915, p.365; Nirad C.Chaudhuri, The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian, 1951, p.226, and A.C.Gupta (ed.), Studies in the Bengal Renaissance, 1958, pp.176 and 414.

31. A wave of agitations urging people to boycott foreign goods and to buy svadeśī products instead flooded Bengal. As a result Bengalee economic enterprise suddenly got tremendous support and manifold opportunities. Scores of small industries grew up and big enterprises like Banking, Insurance, Shipping, Textile-production and so forth were launched with Bengalee capital. Yet, in spite of Nabanur's seemingly favouring the svadeśī movement, all these were mostly 'Hindu' affairs. - See A.C.Gupta, op.cit., pp.549-551.

32. Khayerunnisa Khatun, 'Svadeśānurāg', Naba Nūr, 3rd yr., 6th no.; Āsvin, 1312 (1905).

in the Moslem community for the Svadeśī movement.<sup>33</sup> An article in Islām-pracārak in 1907 appears to rejoice over the failure of this "perverse Hindu Svadeśī movement... The rhythmic clank of indigenous looms is silent. Foreign goods fill the land." Foreign cigarettes, textiles, salt, sugar and shoes were now back in Calcutta's markets "at twice the previous volume". "The Svadeśī movement survives in name alone in newspaper propaganda and the dry orations of word-spinners. Otherwise, it is now quite dead. The illusory 'Hindu Svadeśī movement' is now exactly like their gods: outwardly decked in wondrous splendour, but inwardly inert and lifeless."<sup>34</sup>

Apparently the Hindus had been coercing Moslems into joining their movement.<sup>35</sup> Another article in Islām-pracārak in 1907 stated, "Bengalee Hindus have begun inhumanly oppressing, tyrannising and coercing poor, innocent Moslems. On the pretext of their Svadeśī movement, they have destroyed, and are still destroying, the foreign clothing, foreign sugar and foreign salt of hundreds and hundreds of Moslems, who have been

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33. For the reasons why Svadeśī agitations failed to rouse favourable reactions among Moslem masses, see Rabīndra racanābali, Vol.X, 1950, pp.522-528.

34. Editor, Bāṅgīya Musalmāniger gātrothhān', Islām-pracārak, 8th yr., 2nd no.; Fālgun, 1313 B.S. (1907).

35. See Rabīndra racanābali, op.cit., pp.527-528.

forced to pay through the nose for inferior indigenous salt, inferior indigenous sugar and inferior indigenous cloth. These oppressions have been borne under duress, but how much longer can they be borne? In order to coerce them into accepting the Hindu line, the Hindus have, following the outbreaks in Comilla, begun using greater force to destroy the foreign-made belongings of Moslems. As a result, flare-ups occurred at first in such places as Magrā and Ghātiyārā in Tippera and then Jamalpur, Dewanganj and Bakshiganj in Mymensing.<sup>36</sup> In each of these places the Hindus at first trampled on the Moslems, but afterwards in a few areas received beatings in return.<sup>37</sup> No one can blame the Moslems for this."<sup>38</sup>

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36. For an account of the troubles see Sufia Ahmad, Some Aspects of the History of the Muslim community in Bengal, 1884-1912, London University unpublished Ph.D. thesis, 1960, pp.388-390.
37. "The volunteer brigades and samitis [preaching svadeshi] for a time found stimulating work in policing the boycott and promoting svadesi products, but this activity in its turn provoked a hostile response from non-bhadrolok - Muslims, Namasudras and Marwaris - who had no desire to be involved. The manner in which the new bhadrolok [i.e. Hindu] leadership was using Hindu symbols to identify their nationalism was particularly offensive to the Muslims, and when a few bhadrolok [Hindu] Zamindars and lawyers attempted to use their economic and social power to coerce their inferiors, the Muslims organised resistance. The result was serious communal trouble in Calcutta and various parts of Eastern Bengal." - J.H. Broomfield, Elite Conflict in a Plural Society, 1968, pp.31-32; see also Sedition Committee, 1918, Report, p.19.
38. Ebne Ma'az, 'Bhārater bartamān rājnāitik absthā o Musalmān jātir kartabya', Islām-pracārak, 8th yr., 4th no.; Jyāiṣṭha, 1314 B.S. (1907).

Indeed Islām-pracāarak in 1908 declared that 'the present perverted Svadeśī movement' was contrary to Islam: "Does the Islamic religion enjoin you to burn anyone's foreign goods, to throw them into the river, to tear them up or smash them into pieces? Does the Islamic religion teach you to obstruct foreign goods coming into the country or to impede foreign trade? No, never: such unnatural injunctions are alien to, and impossible in, the Islamic religion, which on the contrary declares such conduct sinful."<sup>39</sup>

As regards Congress, Islām-pracāarak in 1908 rejoiced over its 'death':<sup>40</sup> "The 22 year old Congress, having entered its 23rd year, is finished. Fortunately, with the exception of two or three negligible, perverted svadeśī touts, who bear the name of Moslems, no famous Moslem was present at its death bed."<sup>41</sup>

(c) Emergence of Moslem League.<sup>42</sup>

The editor of Islām-pracāarak in its 8th year indicated that

39. Ebne Ma'az, 'Bhāi Musalmān jāgo', Islām-pracāarak, 8th yr., 8th no.; Māgh, 1314 B.S. (1908).  
It may be pointed out that Islām-pracāarak's observations on the Svadeśī were followed up later by Islām darśan in 1921. Infra pp. 102-03.
40. Reference here is to the breaking-up of the Surat Congress in 1907. See chapter on Hindu-Moslem Relations, pp. 153-54.
41. Editor, Jātīya o dharma sambād, Islām-pracāarak, 8th yr., 8th no.; Māgh, 1314 B.S. (1908).
42. The All-India Moslem League was founded on December 30, 1906 in Dacca to serve exclusively Moslem political interests in British India. The first resolution of the convention stated the objects of the League as follows: "(a) To promote, among the Mussalmans of India, feelings of loyalty to the British Government, and to remove any misconception that may arise as to the intention of Government with regard to any of the measures. (b) To protect and advance the political rights and interests of Mussalmans of India, and to respectfully represent

(Continued on next page....)

the Hindu political leaders were deeply upset over the likelihood of a branch of the Moslem national political organisation known as the All-India Moslem League being founded shortly in Bombay. The Hindus were, therefore, harassing Moslem leaders such as the Nawab Bahadur of Dacca,<sup>43</sup> the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Nabab Ali Choudhury<sup>44</sup> and Maulvi/Choudhury<sup>45</sup> and preventing them from holding political meetings.<sup>46</sup> The Hindus involved seemed to

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their needs and aspirations to the Government. (c) To prevent the rise among the Mussalmans of India of any feeling of hostility towards other communities, without prejudice to the aforementioned objects of the League." - quoted in Matiur Rahman, op.cit., p.38.

43. The Nawab of Dacca Hon'ble Sir Khwaja Salimullah Bahadur (1871-1915) was one of the most important personalities in Moslem society. He welcomed the partition of Bengal in 1905, presided over All-India Mahomedan Educational Conference in 1906, and it was under his patronage that the All-India Moslem League was founded in Dacca. He made great sacrifices for the promotion of education among Bengalee Moslems. He was member, Legislative Council of Eastern Bengal and Assam, and believed in co-operation with the Government.
44. The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Syed Nabab Ali Choudhury (1863-1929), a prominent zemindar of Mymensing, was one most important figure in Bengalee Moslem society during the first quarter of the present century. He supported the partition of Bengal, organised Moslem League, was member, Legislative Council and subsequently made Provincial Minister in Bengal. He always favoured the Government and strongly opposed Khilāfat agitations.
45. Hossam Haidar Choudhury, a leading zemindar of Comilla, was closely connected with all major political and benevolent activities in Moslem society. He was a prominent Moslem League leader and was elected member, Eastern Bengal and Assam Provincial Council, 1909-10.
46. Infra pp.78-79.

have been members of Congress or of the Svadeśī movement.

"It is infinitely regrettable", Islām-pracāarak commented, "that a number of vile individuals, treacherous to their own people, who bear the name of Moslem, have become the principal accomplices of the Hindus in achieving their fell schemes."<sup>47</sup>

Commenting on the All-India Moslem League in 1923,<sup>48</sup> the editor of Choltān wrote, "Fourteen or fifteen years ago, when the All-India Moslem League was founded, its aims were to support Government and oppose Congress; for it was then considered a serious offence for Moslems to join the latter institution. The one or two Moslems who did were labelled Hindu-boot-lickers and traitors to their religion and community."<sup>49</sup> Since there was this opposition between Congress and the League, it is perhaps not surprising that clashes should have occurred

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47. Editor, 'Jātiya o dharma sambād', Islām-Pracāarak, 8th yr., 3rd no.

48. From the journals and periodicals so far consulted it would seem that, with the exception of Islām-pracāarak the vernacular Moslem Press did not much mention the Moslem League until 1923, presumably because Moslem politics in Bengal were in those days dominated by the Ulemā. Consequently, the League did not come to the forefront until the Ulemā-led Khilāfat movement died out circa 1924.

49. Editor, 'Kaṅgres o Mosalmān', Choltān, 8th yr., 17th no.; 21st Bhādra, 1330 B.S.; 7th September, 1923.

between the two communities. Reading between the lines of Moslem Press reports it would seem that Hindus were mainly taking the initiative in political matters and were trying <sup>^to</sup> cajole, hoodwink or coerce Moslems to follow their lead. The assumption of an initiative by Moslem leaders themselves seems to have greatly angered Hindus: for example, Islām-pracārak, while commenting on an incident at Comilla, wrote, "Probably no one is unaware of the dreadful incident which recently occurred in Comilla. The evils of the perverse Hindu svadeśī movement are gradually manifesting themselves. The rebellious speeches of Hindu leaders involved in this agitation against the partition of Bengal has set ablaze a fire of unrest throughout the land... They have tried to hoodwink Moslems into joining their movement, but when Moslem leaders suddenly assumed leadership of their own community, the high hopes of the Hindus were impeded and their aspirations almost extinguished. Pal [Bipin Chandra Pal], Banerji [Surendra Nath Banerji] and their disciples have been setting up their meetings and committees all over Bengal, without any interference from Moslems. Yet, as soon as it was announced the Nawab Bahādur [Nawab Khawaja Salimullah Bahadur of Dacca] would be holding a meeting in Comilla, these Hindu disciples of Bande Mātaram got up to new tricks. A group of them in Comilla hatched a plot to ruin the Nawab's meeting. When, after a tumultuous Moslem reception, the Nawab Bahadur, the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur [Syed Nabab Ali

Choudhury] and Prince Khan Bahadur of Paschim Gaon were setting out on the 4th of March for the residence of the most important local zemindar, Maulvi Syed Hossam Haidar Choudhury, some infidel Hindu cast a stone or brick at the Nawab Bahadur. Some of these fiendish, ill-bred Hindus did not even hesitate, so it is said, to threaten the Nawab and other Moslem leaders with brooms...precipitating a clash with the Moslem general public, who were loyal and devoted to the Nawab Bahadur. No matter how these ill-bred nihilist Bengalee Hindus boast, they fear to face Moslem valour and vigour; so, very likely they did receive a punch or two. The peace-loving, noble-hearted Nawab Bahadur and the other Moslem leaders did their best, however, to pacify excited fellow Moslems... The clash will have deplorable repercussions, and set back India's advancement one hundred years. It goes without saying that the Hindus of Comilla have been very imprudent."<sup>50</sup>

(d) Moslem Press still urging Moslems to remain aloof from politics.

According to an editorial in Islām-pracārak in its 8th year it would seem, however, that Moslems were still being urged to remain aloof from politics regarding involvement as disastrous. The editor wrote: "A heretical Moslem graduate in Delhi has launched an Urdu newspaper called 'Aftāb' at the instigation

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50. Editor, 'Ātīyā o dharma sambād', Islām-pracārak, 8th yr., 2nd no.; Fālgun, 1313 B.S. (1907).

of some Congressite Hindu and is attacking the British Government and the Moslem people. In this connection my fellow Moslems should remember two Calcutta journals namely the English weekly newspaper 'Musalmān' and the Bengali 'Soltān'.<sup>51</sup> Though these are known as Moslem newspapers they actually belong to Hindus in the 'Bande Mātaram' crowd or to Congressite touts. These papers have no relation with the opinion of Moslem society. Their editors are out to destroy their own people for their personal interests. All Moslems should carefully protect themselves from these treacherous journals."<sup>52</sup>

(e) Terrorist Movement.

There seems to have been a strong feeling among Moslem editors against the Terrorist movement indulged in by Bengalee Hindus.<sup>53</sup> According to Islām-pracārak in 1907, in their

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51. The Musalmān, edited by Mujibur Rahman, is acclaimed as one of the pioneers of Bengalee Moslem journalism. Yet it was never in its days favoured by the communal and pro-Government Moslem journals, because of its maintaining a strong policy of promoting nationalist, political agitations. The weekly Soltān, too, was censured for its supporting Congress-sponsored political movements.

52. Editor, 'Jātiyā o dharma sambād', Islām-pracārak, 8th yr., 3rd no.

53. Moslem press opposed the Terrorist movement mainly for three reasons: firstly, the pro-Government section quite understandably, did not favour revolutionary terrorism, that was designed expressly to strike at Government; secondly, any anti-Government activities, let alone terrorism, were regarded as contrary to Moslem communal interests; thirdly, the religious aspect of the Terrorist movement having been little more than extreme Hindu nationalism, as defined by Tilak, Aurobindo, Bipinchandra and Brahmabandhab, was provocatively anti-Islamic.

determination to defeat both the British and the Moslems. Hindus recruited from all classes, ranging from the highly-educated to school-boys, were training themselves in such things as stove-fighting and wrestling. "Their alarming antics have lit fires of insurrection throughout Bengal." These thugs had shot dead a Moslem in Comilla, slaughtered two others in Jamalpur and in the guise of both Hindu and Moslem mendicants were spreading terrorism throughout Bengal. Disguised as Maulvīs (Moslem religious persons), they were inciting Moslems to loot Hindu homes, marry Hindu widows and rape Hindu ladies on the assurance of help from both the Government and the Nawab of Dacca. Islām-pracārak was pleased that "the authorities have realised the alarming form this illegal incitement by Hindu terrorists has assumed." It therefore cautioned Moslems not to associate with Hindu terrorists or do anything at their instigation, "which would occasion annoyance or displeasure to the Government."<sup>54</sup>

That same issue of Islām-pracārak also reported upon the protest meetings held by Moslem associations in the Punjab condemning the terrorist activities of Punjabi Hindus, especially of 'Congressite touts in the Ārya Samāj'. "They have also

54. Ebne Ma'az, 'Bhārater rājnāitik abasthā o Musalmān jātir kartabya', Islām-pracārak, 8th yr., 4th no.; Jyāiṣṭha, 1314 B.S. (1907).

stated in unequivocal language that no Moslem was either associated, or in sympathy, with, this Hindu lawlessness. The resolutions...have been sent to the British authorities, thereby demonstrating the proper loyalty of Punjabi Moslems."<sup>55</sup> Later on Islām-pracāarak expressed satisfaction in the fact that Moslems were not "associated with the present disturbances [terrorist activities] in India. May God preserve them from this highly contagious disease".<sup>56</sup>

Commenting on the first Svadeśī movement about one and a half decades later the editor of Choltān observed that it was then "that political murderers first emerged. Then on the scene appeared a group of gentlement-bandits."<sup>57</sup> After many of these had been arrested and sentenced, gentleman-banditry for a long time ceased to be manifest... Fortunately, Moslem youngmen had never been associated with such banditry, murder and so forth."<sup>58</sup>

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55. Editor, Jātiya o dharma sambād, ibid.

56. Editor, 'jātiya o dharma sambād', Islām-pracāarak, 8th yr., 12th no.

57. This refers to the political dacoities, popularly known as svadeśī-dākāti, that were frequently committed by volunteers from revolutionary parties. For a report of such crimes perpetrated between 1907 and 1918 and for other details, see Sedition Committee, 1918, Report.

58. Editor, 'śikṣita dākāt', Choltān, 8th yr., 20th no.; 11th Āśvin, 1330 B.S., 28th September, 1923. Yet, it would seem there was also a Muhamedan element involved in violent, terroristic activities. The Sedition Committee Report states, "In January 1917 it was discovered that a party of eight Muhammadans had joined the Mujahidin  
(Continued on next page.....)

(f) Some Western-educated Moslems in favour of political activity by Moslems.

It may have been noticed in section (d) above that the person who launched the anti-British journal in Delhi round about 1906 was a graduate, as also was the contributor to Hāfej in 1897.<sup>59</sup> It would seem that, partly due to their education and partly to their contact with their politically-advanced associates, these graduates had become conscious of India's political condition and wished to ameliorate it.

An article in Naba Nur in 1905 is interesting as one of the first statements of the political opinions of a section of educated Moslem society and we therefore quote it: "The British are reluctant to fulfil the aspirations they have aroused in the hearts of the educated of this country by disseminating political ideas from time to time and by spreading English education. This has caused political agitations all over the place. It is a travesty of truth to say that these political agitations are confined merely to Hindus. With the spread of education, the desire to ameliorate the mother land is spreading

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[i.e. Moslem revolutionaries] from the districts of Rangpur and Dacca in Eastern Bengal." (See pp.174-76). Since such Moslem activities were presumably isolated and not as conspicuous as those of Hindus, the Moslem press may well have been unaware of them.

59. Though Hāfej itself maintained its pro-Congress policy, its contributor to it in 1897 had by 1904 changed his view point, however, see p p. 68-69.

throughout the whole country...

"Thanks to Lord Ripon's administration, the aspirations of the educated community of this country have widened and the political agitations have assumed greater speed than hitherto. It was at this time that the veteran diplomat Lord Dufferin appeared on the scene. In collaboration with his able colleague, Lieutenant Sir Auckland Colvin, he determined to weaken political agitations by a policy of divide and rule. It was from then on that the back-slapping of Moslems began. The result of this back-slapping was a circular which was nothing but an attempt to throw dust into the eyes of Moslems. In this circular the British Government in India announced that if an equally-qualified Moslem candidate applied for a post, then he was to be given priority over a Hindu. The job opportunities for Hindus under the British Government were limited. The British thought they would be able to keep the Moslems separate from the Hindus by tempting them with these limited job opportunities...

"As far as the Government was concerned both Hindus and Moslems were aliens to it: the assumption of power by either of them was equally against the interests of the British. The British policy is now clear to educated Moslem society. And the British Government has also realised that it is not feasible to keep educated Moslems satisfied with mere empty words. Consequently, an ebb-tide has set in in British affections for

Moslems. On a visit to Mymensing Lord Curzon used harsh words in reply to a Moslem petition for Government jobs.

"Consequently, it is equally necessary for Hindus and Moslems alike to make political agitations. That is why we now see Hindus and Moslems going forward hand-in-hand in political movements....

"For a whole decade the Moslems stood aloof from political agitations begging for Government favours. But what good has it done them? Did the Moslems acquire any rights or privileges during those long years?....

"My final point is this: the Moslem decline has reached its limit. There is no longer time for bandying words. The time for genuine action has arrived. We must strive for advancement in all spheres. It is ridiculous to hope to nourish the remaining limbs of the body of society by keeping one limb unnourished. Consequently, we must participate in political movements also."<sup>60</sup>

A further article two months later was written in a similar vein and seems to have been aimed at getting Moslem society to collaborate with Hindus in the Svadeśī movement. We quote:  
 "However much the British may have helped to uplift us, their policy of divide-and-rule has done us irrevocable harm. It has so widened the paper-thin line of difference between Hindus and

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60. Khayer Khāh Munshi, 'Rājnāitīk āndolon o Musalmān', Naba Nūr, 3rd yr., 5th no.; Bhādra, 1312 B.S. (1905).

Moslems, that the Hindus are now alienated from us... That education, which increasingly enfeebles the student and denies him the opportunity to cultivate politics, is in no way western education; for, an integral part of western education is politics. The British have no intention, however, of making us politically great, by imparting that education properly. Consequently, they wish to exclude politics from our education... Our attempts to obtain our just rights in the administration of our country have disturbed them, and they intend suppressing them. Furthermore, they have been forced to seek a way of even closing our path to higher education. University ordinances<sup>61</sup> are an easily recognisable move in that direction... The political power which has established domination over us wishes to suppress our cultivation of politics and has deprived us of our rights in the administration of our country. It forbids us to consider our own welfare. This kind of domination can, however, never become firmly established."<sup>62</sup>

It would seem, however, from subsequent events that the two articles failed to awaken much response; for Moslems were still too apathetic to safeguard their own political

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61. This refers to Lord Curzon's education policy, as embodied in the Indian University Act, 1904.

62. Maalvi Mohammad Hedayetullah, 'Svadeśī āndolon', Naba Nūr, 3rd yr., 7th no.; Kārtik, 1312 B.S. (1905).

interests, let alone unite with Hindus in a concerted campaign.<sup>63</sup>

(g) Bengalee Moslems still apathetic in regard to politics.

A report in Islām-pracārak in 1908 would seem to indicate that the Mahomedan Education Conference and the All-India Moslem League sessions held in Karachi in December, 1907 were poorly attended as far as Bengal was concerned: "There is no doubt that this great convention would have been devoid of any Bengalee delegate had not the Khan Bahadur Sahib [Syed Nabab Ali Choudhury] and his two companions and the editor and reporter of the Sudhākar [Mihir o sudhākar] been present in Karachi."<sup>64</sup>

### III

#### 1919-1923

(a) Hindu-Moslem political collaboration.<sup>65</sup>

(i) Via Congress.

The Khilāfat movement drove Moslems into collaboration

63. An interesting reference in this regard is the resolution passed by the Moslem League over the annulment of the Partition of Bengal in 1911. Though considered detrimental to Moslem interests, this Government action was not censured by the League in its special session in Dacca on December 30, 1911. Indeed, the resolution states: "the Mahomedans out of their Loyalty to and profound respect and regard for the Throne, feel that they have no other alternative but to desist from entering a protest (against it)." - Quoted in Matiur Rahman, op.cit., p.243.

64. Editor, 'Jātīyā o dharma sambād', Islām-pracārak, 8th yr., 8th no.; Māgh, 1314 B.S. (1908).

65. The first public manifestation of collaboration between Hindus and Moslems was in anti-Government demonstrations in 1919 over 'Rowlatt Acts' and 'Jalianwalabagh massacre'. The union between the two was finally cemented, when Non-cooperation - Khilāfat agitations swept the country. The Jamiyat-i-Ulemā-i-Hind issued a fatwā sanctioning the Congress-sponsored Non-cooperation movement. The Congress, on the other hand, gave

with Hindus and thus Congress began being attended by Moslems in greater numbers. In 1920 Al-Eslām wrote: "During the long 34 years of its existence, no session of Congress has been attended by so great a number of Moslem delegates as was this recent special session. My heart jumps with joy to announce that from amongst those Maalvīs, who always declined to attend Congress, deeming it a Hindu institution, and indeed, who have until now disdained it, at least one thousand Ulemā, Fāzels and so forth attended this recent session. This leads one to conclude that distressed by the Khilāfat question people from all classes of Moslem society...assembled...to make known their distress."<sup>66</sup>

Choltān had always been in favour of collaboration with Congress and its management had in fact been attending since round about 1910. This had exposed them to many bitter attacks from the conservative pro-Government Moslem press. But now during the Khilāfat movement Moslem public opinion was beginning to move in step with Choltān, who in 1923 expressed the belief that "Politics are part of Islam, whose very foundations are the State, the Administration and the Khilāfat. The main means of

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full support to Khilāfat agitations: Gandhi, accompanied by Khilāfat leaders, the Ali brothers and Maolana Azad, toured the country extensively to drum up public support for Khilāfat demands. See also chapter on Hindu-Moslem Relations, pp. 162-63.

66. Sheikh Abdul Gafur Jalāli, 'Khilāfat o Bhāratbāsī', Al-Eslām, 6th yr., 5th no.; Bhādra, 1327 B.S. (1920).

preserving the Khilāfat and of protecting Islam is Holy War (Jehād). Consequently, Moslems are deeply committed to politics... We hope Moslems will devote more and more of their energies to Congress, and within Congress will strive to increase their numbers and extend their influence."<sup>67</sup>

Later that year Choltān expressed regret about the number of Moslems who had been elected members of the general assembly of the Bengal Congress. "Of 268 elected members, only 32 are Moslem... An executive council of 60 members has been formed, it includes only 19 Moslems... Of the 7 office-holders, only 2 are Moslem...due consideration does not appear to have been given to Moslems."<sup>68</sup>

A little later that year Choltān returned to the theme of Moslem indifference to political affairs complaining that they did not contribute the four-anna subscription to Congress on time, nor did they seek to become members of the Provincial Congress committee. Naturally their views were not properly represented in Congress. "It is essential", Choltān maintained, "that in future Moslems should be circumspect in all these regards".<sup>69</sup>

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67. Editor, 'Kaṅgres o Mochalmān', Choltān, 8th yr., 17th no.; 21st Bhādra, 1330 B.S. 7th September, 1923.
68. Editor, 'Baṅgīya Kaṅgres Kamiṭi', Choltān, 8th yr., 30th no.; 28th Agrahāyaṇ, 1330 B.S., 14th December, 1923.
69. Editor, 'Kaṅgres o Mochalmān', Choltān, 8th yr., 31st no. 5th Pāuṣ, 1330 B.S., 21st December, 1923.

In general Choltān's view seems to have been summed up by a remark of its editor in June, 1923: "To achieve the objects with which as Indians we are involved in India we must co-operate with Congress."<sup>70</sup>

(ii) The aims of Collaboration.

1. The Khilāfat<sup>71</sup>

The hostility between Britain and Turkey during the First World War placed Moslems in an unhappy position and the Khilāfat question immediately after the war reveals the deep dilemma into which Moslems had fallen. A clash of loyalties was being waged in their hearts between their loyalty to their King Emperor, who held temporal power over them, and the Sultan,

70. Editor, 'Amāder bhabīṣyat Kāryapraṇālī', Choltān, 8th yr., 8th no.; 14th Āṣāḥ, 1330 B.S., 29th June, 1923.

71. "The growing weakness and fast decline of Turkey before 1914 and her losses during the First World War (1914-18) threatening her with complete extinction roused the liveliest interests of the Indian Muhammadans and a movement was started in about 1920 for exercising pressure on England so that she might not join in the destruction of Turkey and the Caliphate. This movement amongst the Indian Muhammadans is known as the Khilafat movement." (S. Bhattacharya, A Dictionary of Indian History, 1967, p.520). The movement sanctioned the Congress-programme of 'Non-violent Non-Cooperation' and forbade Moslems from serving the Indian Government in any capacity, particularly in the Indian Army. Furthermore, India under British rule was declared to be Dār ul harb i.e. a place of war. This resulted in an exodus of about 20,000 Moslems to Afghanistan. The Khilāfat agitations, however, continued in full force upto March, 1924, when Kemal Pasha 'pricked the Khilafat bubble' by deposing and banishing the Caliph himself. See also chapter on Moslem World.

Caliph of Turkey, who held spiritual power over them. This dilemma is clearly seen in the following quotation from Baṅga Nūr in 1920: "The chief concern of the Moslems is what can now be done in regard to the Caliphate... Most unfortunately for us our Emperor waged war with our Caliph, the Sultan of Turkey. There were always good relations between these two States, and our Emperor always helped our Caliph, the ruler of Turkey. No other king in the world has as many Moslem subjects as our Emperor. Consequently good relations and friendship between these two states was natural. In these circumstances it is difficult to understand why this has happened. Nevertheless, the two Emperors waged war. Why they fought against each other, despite so many grounds for friendship, is a matter that they alone can know. All that we can say from the outside is that some serious cause must have compelled our Emperor to make war on Turkey and the Sultan of Turkey to make war on our Emperor. The British king was victorious. The treaty is now being negotiated... Our most serious concern now is the protection of our holy places<sup>72</sup> and the settlement of our Khilāfat question. In reply to all the petitions sent to it in this regard from our various meetings and associations the Government has stated

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72. This refers to the Moslem holy places in Middle East which were occupied by the Allied forces in First World War.

that the solution of the Khilāfat question is up to Moslems alone... But the Moslems can not do anything about the matter until they see what solution is in store for the Turkish empire... We pitifully petition our just British king in this regard."<sup>73</sup>

To make the matter clear to British readers perhaps an analogy could be drawn between the position of the Pope in the hearts of British Catholics and the position of the Caliph in the hearts of Indian Moslems.<sup>74</sup> It was as impossible to imagine Islam without a Caliph as it is to imagine Catholicism without a Pope. Therefore in 1920 Islām-dārsan wrote, "His Excellency the Sultan of Turkey is the approved Caliph and universally-acknowledged representative of the whole Moslem World... Islam without a Caliph is like a boat without a helmsman... It is therefore essential for the Moslem world to elect a Caliph... Some people suggest that someone else be elected Caliph instead of His Excellency the Sultan [of Turkey]. But they ought to recognise that this is completely impossible... We fear that those who attempt to do this will be sinners and

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73. Syed Nabab Ali Choudhury, 'Abhibhāsan', Bānga Nur, 1st yr., 4th no.; Fālgun, 1326 B.S. (1920).

74. "...The Sunni Muslim community of India has for many years past taken especial interest in the affairs of the Ottoman Caliphate, and had been in the habit for many decades of mentioning the name of the Ottoman Caliph in the Khuṭbāh. To him they looked as the defender of the faith, since the only hope of the abiding glory and prestige of Islam was centred in him...for the Caliph symbolised the unity and strength of Islam." - Murray T. Titus, Indian Islam, 1930, pp.60-61; see also chapter on Moslem World.

heretics."<sup>75</sup> Some Moslems were clearly concerned about the possibility of bloodshed over the Khilāfat question. It will be seen in the following quotation from Islam-darśan how Moslem leaders were struggling, on the one hand, to warn the British Government of the violence that might break out over this at any moment and, on the other, to restrain Moslems from violence and to persuade them peacefully to petition the British to hand back to the Turks all the territory they had siezed:

"As a well-wisher of the British Government I emphasise that... Moslems are a peace-loving, God-fearing nation. But when their religious beliefs are affected they go to extremes. In consideration of this it is proper that the Government should in accordance with its own agreement hand back to the Turks all those lands which have now been snatched from them and which previously were subject to the authority of the Turkish Government. Otherwise, there is a danger of great unrest and peril in India...<sup>76</sup>

I expect of the British Government that they should do nothing

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75. 'Khilāfat prasāṅga', Islām-darśan, 1st yr., 1st no.; Bâisākh, 1327 B.S. (1920).

76. The British had during the war managed to gain Indian Moslem support, by clear assurances that the Turkish Empire would not be dismembered, nor the Caliphate disestablished. At the cessation of hostilities, however, the British government had abandoned its promises. Under the terms of the Treaty of Sevres (1920) the Turkish Empire was partitioned: it lost not only its Arab provinces, which were placed under the control of Britain and France, but other places also: Constantinople and the Straits, a large part of Asia Minor and nearly the whole of Thrace were put under different European powers. The Caliph-Sultan himself was 'made a virtual prisoner in the hands of an allied High Commission'. Indian Moslems were naturally shocked at this; they felt deceived. In consequence, violent reactions over the Turkish question were manifested via  
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which will harm our religion or interfere with it. Should such things occur inadvertently, however, I hope that they will be swiftly remedied.

"I now request the Moslems in general and my own friends in particular that in seeking to draw the attention of the British Government to the Khilāfat question they should do all in their power to adopt only those means whereby there is no danger of a breach of peace or bloodshed occurring."<sup>77</sup>

The expression of opinion in Al-Eslām in 1921 was however less restrained, and an underlying anti-British tinge was now clearly discernible: "Unless the Caliphate is protected and unless the Caliph's throne, jurisdiction and prestige are preserved, Islam will be irreparably harmed and the Islamic nation destroyed... The Caliph constitutes the spinal cord of the Islamic religion and the Moslem nation... The way the allies have destroyed and devastated the empire of the Turkish Sultan, the sole Caliph of the Moslem world, and have arbitrarily partitioned it has absolutely ruined the Caliph's prestige and

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Khilāfat agitations, demanding that all pre-war Turkish territories be handed back to the Caliph.

77. Maulana Shah Sufi Mohammad Abu Bakar Sahib, 'Abhibhāṣan', Islām-darśan, 1st yr., 7th no.; kārtik, 1327 B.S. (1920). This, however, reflects the compromising attitudes of a particular section of Moslem public opinion. Yet, it is to be remembered that during the early 1920s Khilāfat captured people's minds. Consequently, the rather stronger anti-British stand, taken by Choltān, would have immediately attracted wide popular support.

honour. Our holy places are now occupied by infidels."<sup>78</sup>

Interlaced with the Khilāfat question was the question of the identity of the Bengalee Moslems and the nation to which they belonged.<sup>79</sup> If they belonged to a world-wide Moslem nation based on religion then their loyalty to the Caliphate would override all other considerations. But if they belonged to an all-India Indian nation based on birth place and domicile

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78. Manirazzaman Islamabadi, 'Asahayogitā o amāder kartabya', Al-Eslām, 6th yr., 10th no.; Māgh, 1327 B.S. (1921).
79. Bengalee Moslems had seemingly long been in a dilemma over their nationhood, and this was to remain a thorny problem for many years to come. The points at issue were: (i) did the Moslems of Bengal belong to a Bengalee nation, or to a more broadly-based Indian nation; (ii) or did they perhaps form an integral part of a world-wide Moslem nation based on Islamic brotherhood. Needless to say, the seeds of this problem lay in Bengal Moslems seeking to achieve a separate identity for themselves, based apparently on religion. This accounts for their propensity for directing their gaze to the Moslem countries outside India. It may be further noted that the Pan-Islamic movement, coupled with Khilāfat agitations, provided a stronger base in Moslem minds for the development of world-wide Moslem nationalism. Yet, throughout the years from 1900 to 1930, there existed a counter challenge too, which attempted to promote among Moslems the concept of Bengalee or Indian nationalism. For example, Pracārak in 1900 stated "I am satisfied to identify myself as a Bengalee". Twenty one years later Moslem Bhārat posed the question: "Are we first of all Moslems, or, inhabitants of India?" And, in 1928 Saogāt stated more explicitly, "Through its emphasis on religion Bengalee Moslem society has completely ignored the claims of nationality, completely forgetting that Islam is a religion, not a nation." Saogāt's attitude is unmistakably clear. Nevertheless, it was via this concept of religious nationalism that Moslems eventually succeeded in achieving their separate state of Pakistan.

and thus secular in outlook then their first priority was the preservation of Indian interests alone. This was the question raised in Moslem Bhārat in 1921: "Are we first of all Moslems, or, inhabitants of India? That is, are we obliged first of all to safeguard the interests of the Moslem world, or is it the interests of India that we must consider first?... [If] the representatives of the Caliphate, for which we are now striving so desperately, were to invade India, then it would be our duty to oppose them. For, we must become independent not only from the British but also from all other foreign powers. Of course as Moslems we could perhaps achieve liberty and equality with them [i.e. the Turkish invaders], but we are not the only inhabitants of India. No one...has the right to hold in subjection all these countless Hindus, Buddhists and Christians of India."<sup>80</sup> Thus it would seem that in some sections of Moslem society blind loyalty to the Khalifā (Caliph) had disappeared, even as early as 1921.

On the other hand Choltān in June, 1923 opined that "For the time being, to achieve our wider religious and national objects outside India we must abide by the decisions of the Khilāfat Committee."<sup>81</sup>

80. Abdullah al Azad, 'Nan-ko-apāreśan bā asahayogitā', Moslem Bhārat, 1st yr., 4th no.; Māgh, 1327 B.S. (1921).

81. Editor, 'Amāder bhābiśyat kāryapraṇāḥī', Choltān, 8th yr., 8th no.; 14th Aṣāḥ, 1330 B.S., 29th Jāne, 1923.

2. Svarāj.<sup>82</sup>

It would seem from remarks in the Press about Svarāj that the meaning of the word itself was deliberately kept a little vague. Kazi Nazrul Islam<sup>^ (1899-)</sup>, for example, in an editorial in his Dhūm Ketu in 1922 declared, "I do not understand this Svarāj business. Every eminent leader interprets it in his own individual way." Nevertheless, Nazrul's position was unequivocal: "Not one scrap of Indian soil should remain subject to foreigners.... The present king and administrators who are bossing this country are turning it into a burning ground... When we petition them...they refuse to listen. They still have not acquired that much sense... We must give up this nonsense of begging from them or supplicating." In brief, as far as Dhūmketu was concerned, the British "must...pack up and be off across the sea."<sup>83</sup>

Choltān, too, in 1923 seemed a little impatient about the vagueness and uncertainty surrounding the meaning of Svarāj: "Mahatma Gandhi always used to try to remain vague in his

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82. Svarāj (lit. 'self-government'), as associated with Non-co-operation agitations, was a Congress-sponsored political movement launched in 1920. It aimed at the construction of 'a government of one's own within the dead shell of the foreign [i.e. British] government' via non-violent methods.

83. Editor, 'Dhūmketur pāth', Dhūmketu, 1st yr., 13th no.; 26th Āśvin, 1329 B.S. (1922). It may be noted that Dhūmketu here clearly contradicts the official Congress line, which, by the term Svarāj, did not imply 'full political independence'.

exposition of Svarāj." <sup>84</sup> The reason for the vagueness was implicit in Choltān's article. For it stated: "The venerable Maolana Hasrat Mohani <sup>85</sup> attempted to define the meaning of Svarāj in Nagpur and Ahmedabad - he has been given a two-year prison sentence for making that attempt." Nevertheless, Choltān saw no reason for being satisfied "with mere spiritual and moral interpretations of it. There is no sense in congratulating ourselves on having attained Svarāj merely because we have learnt to take beatings. <sup>86</sup> That is indicative of faint heartedness and limited aspirations. Congress should keep a sharp look-out lest people are deceived and misled by such specious explanations of Svarāj." <sup>87</sup>

In June 1923 Choltān drew attention to the question of

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84. Presumably the 'vagueness' referred to arose from Gandhi's own interpretation of 'Svarāj', which to him was not merely political, but more importantly, moral and spiritual.
85. Maolana Hasrat Mohani (1875-1951) was one of the front-rank leaders of the Khilāfat-Svarāj agitations and an important figure in Congress executive. He also presided over the All-India Moslem League session in 1921. The Maolana in the Ahmedabad session of Congress in 1921 proposed that Svarāj meant 'complete Independence free from all foreign control', the definition, which Gandhi did not like.
86. This refers to Police Lathi charges on satyāgraha demonstrations by Svarāj-volunteers, which were intended by Congress to be non-violent and passive.
87. Editor, 'Svarājer byākhyā', Choltān, 8th yr., 3rd no.; 11th Jyāāiṣṭha, 1330 B.S.; 25th May, 1923.

Council elections.<sup>88</sup> Choltān did not itself feel that Svarāj would be attained by getting elected to the Council or by non-co-operation alone. Nevertheless, it did feel that a combination of these activities could clear the path to Svarāj. Therefore, since a number of people in Congress considered election to the Council worthwhile, Choltān maintained Moslems should not impede them. "Everyone must agree...that if a number of patriotic, independent-minded people can get elected to the Council instead of incompetent useless yes-men and lackeys, then at least the country will not be harmed to the extent to which it was in the past."<sup>89</sup>

According to that same issue of Choltān "many short-sighted and politically-ignorant Moslems believe Svarāj will benefit Hindus and that Svarāj is a Hindu-affair." This, Choltān maintained, was a great mistake. It was equally erroneous to "think that the Khilāfat question can be solved only by the sword of Mustafa Kemal, or by the feelings for the Moslem nation of the Amir of Afghanistan." Both views were equally mistaken.

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88. Political leaders and so the nationalist Press at the time were divided over 'Council Entry' issue. Staunch Non-cooperators advocated all-out non-cooperation with Government and regarded the boycotting of Council elections as being one of its most effective methods. On the other hand, the Svarājites led by C.R.Das and Motilal Nehru, though believed committed in principle to non-cooperation, determined to contest the elections, urging that the Legislative Councils be boycotted from within.

89. Editor, 'Kāunsil prabes', Choltān, 8th yr., 4th no.; 18th Jyāâiṣṭha, 1330 B.S.; 1st June, 1923.

"The holy places of the Moslems and Moslem domains will never be free from danger until India has achieved Svarāj... So, those who favour the protection of the Caliph, those who are eager to preserve the sanctity of the holy lands, those who aspire to the independence of Iraq and Egypt and those who wish well for Constantinople and the Caliphate domains must all first of all think about achieving the freedom of India in order to attain the objectives of their nation and religion.... Svarāj will benefit Moslems more than Hindus. Svarāj for India will widen the path for the rise of Moslems throughout the whole world."<sup>90</sup>

(iii) Means.

1. Non-Cooperation.<sup>91</sup>

"A terrible agitation has been stirred up in India over the brutal slaughter at Jalianwalabag<sup>92</sup> and the Khilāfat question",

90. 'Hindu Mochalmān', Choltān, 8th yr., 4th no.; 18th Jyāiṣṭha, 1330 B.S.; 1st June, 1923.

91. In August 1920 Congress rejected the new administrative reforms embodied in the Act of 1919 and launched the Non-cooperation movement, which aimed: "Firstly, to renounce all honorary posts, titles and membership of legislative councils. Secondly, to give up all remuneratory posts under government service. Thirdly, to boycott law courts, schools and colleges. Fourthly, to give up all appointments with the police and military forces. Finally, to refuse to pay taxes to the government." (B.N.Pandey, The Break-up of British India, 1969, p.112). Moslem support invested the movement with an unprecedented all-India character but it was suspended following the Chauri Chaura massacre in 1922.

92. The reference here is to the atrocious killing, under the order of General Dyer, of over 500 unarmed Indians, who had assembled at a meeting at Jalianwalabagh, Amritsar on 13 April, 1919. In protest against the atrocities committed by the British Army, Rabindranath Tagore renounced his knighthood.

Al-Eslām stated in 1921. "This agitation is called Non-cooperation. Its originator is Mahātmā Gandhi, the ideal and distinguished son of India. And his associates are such people as Maolana Shaokat Ali<sup>93</sup> and Maolana Mohammad Ali.<sup>94</sup> Lacs and lacs of people throughout India support this declaration [of Non-cooperation] and are dedicated to it. The aims of the Non-cooperation movement are twofold: firstly, the solving of the Khilāfat question, the restoration of all those domains taken from the Sultan of Turkey and the preservation of the prestige of the Caliph of the Moslem world; and secondly, the gaining of Svarāj for India... The one power amongst the allies which has done most harm to the Turkish Sultan is Britain, under whose

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93. Maolana Shaokat Ali (1873-1938) came to prominence by organising pro-Turkish agitations in India, for which he was interned by India Government during the First World War. After his release he engaged in spreading the Khilāfat movement. He also joined Congress and took active part in the Non-cooperation -Svarāj agitations. Subsequently he severed connection with Congress and joined Moslem League. He was a member of Delegation to the Round Table Conference in London.
94. Maolana Mohammad Ali (1878-1931), younger brother of Maolana Shaokat Ali, was the most outstanding Khilāfat leader, and he played an important role in arousing among Indian Moslems political consciousness. He was a strong advocate of Pan-Islamism. With Gandhi he toured all over India to organise Non-cooperation movement. He presided over the Cocanad Congress in 1923. He had a strong pen, and published the renowned journal, Comrade.

mandate most of his domains now are."<sup>95</sup>

According to the same article in Al-Eslām numerous petitions had been made to the British Government in the last few years by both Hindus and Moslems, but none had been heeded. "Having no other alternative the Moslems have adopted the policy of Non-cooperation. The purpose of the declaration of Non-cooperation was this: "I shall not assist any individual or nation which seeks to harm my religion, my motherland and my individuality"... This is the advice of the Qorān and the Hādith... In order to comply with this religious counsel we must as far as possible relinquish contact with the British."

The editor of Choltān in 1923 was not sanguine about the achievement of Svarāj merely by Non-cooperation and Civil disobedience.<sup>96</sup> Nevertheless, the movement was "infusing into the hearts of Indians some qualities necessary for the attainment of Svarāj and this in itself is for the moment a considerable gain."<sup>97</sup>

## 2. Svadeśī.<sup>98</sup>

Islām-darśan in 1921 was not altogether in sympathy with the boycott of foreign textiles. Attempts had been made to

95. Manirazzaman Islamabadi, 'Asahayogitā o 'āmāder Karttabya', Al-Eslām, 6th yr., 10th no.; Māgh, 1327 B.S. (1921).  
Supra p. 93 f. n. 76.

96. On April 6th, 1919 Gandhi started the first Civil Disobedience movement in protest against the Rowlatt Acts.

97. Editor, 'Ain bhaᅅga Kamiᅇi', Choltān, 8th yr., 23rd no.; 9th Kārtik, 1330 B.S.; 26th October, 1923.

98. The Svadeśī movement, urging people to boycott foreign-made goods and to buy indigenous products instead, originally

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persuade people that foreign textiles were forbidden (hārām) and prayers (namāz) said in them void. In various places such textiles had been burnt because of their alleged sinfulness. "All the specious arguments against the use [of foreign textiles] are political", Islām-darśan declared, "their connection with religion is tenuous... Naturally we fully support the production and use of home-products... But we do not in the least support the burning of foreign textiles or the indulgence in waste, by destroying them in any other way."<sup>99</sup>

Choltān, however, felt two years later that the picketing and boycotting of foreign goods was more likely to lead to the attainment of Svarāj than the packing of jails with political prisoners.<sup>100</sup>

(b) Dissatisfaction with political developments.

(i) Trickery by the conservative wing of Congress.

Choltān in October, 1923 complained that the conservative wing of Congress had been tricking Moslems out of becoming Council members by persuading them that Council membership was

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started in 1905 over Curzon's partition of Bengal. After the annulment of Partition in 1911 the movement apparently lost its intensity only to be revived again with full vigour during Khilāfat - Non-cooperation days.

99. Editor, 'Bideśī bastra barjan', Islām-darśan, 2nd yr., 4th no.; Śrāban, 1328 B.S. (1921).

100. Editor, 'Nāgpure satyāgraha', Choltān, 8th yr., 4th no.; 18th Jyāaiṣṭha, 1330 B.S.; 1st June, 1923.

'hārām' to Moslems. "That is why at the recent special Delhi Congress Maolana Abul Kalam Azād<sup>101</sup> has decreed that it is not only proper ('jāyej') to become Council members but on the contrary one's special obligation... Relying upon what little knowledge we possess of religion and of the Qorān and Hādith we say without hesitation to the Moslems of Bengal and to Moslem voters that voting for worthy candidates who will fight the Government in the Assembly for the sake of the country and for the good of its people is not only jāyej but indeed also one's special duty."<sup>102</sup>

(ii) Lackeys in the All-India Moslem League.

According to Choltān, prior to 1923 the All-India Moslem League had been under the leadership of 'lackeys'. Apparently at a special meeting in Delhi fresh life had been infused into the 'League's corpse'. "It is essential that this reformed

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101. Maolana Abul Kalam Azād (1888-1958) was a versatile genius, a theologian, a scholar, an author, a journalist, and above all, a dedicated patriot. He started his political career by supporting the Pan-Islamic movement and published his famous Urdu journal Al-Hilāl in 1912 from Calcutta. He took part in the Khilāfat as well as Non-cooperation and Svarāj movements. He became the President of the All-India Congress in 1923, and thereafter several times held the highest office in Congress. He also served as the Education Minister in Indian Cabinet after independence.

102. Editorial comment, Choltān, 8th yr., 23rd no.; 9th Kārtik, 1330 B.S.; 26th October, 1923.

League should be guided by Moslem nationalists", Choltān declared.<sup>103</sup> The 'lackeys' were not identified, but one presumes them to have been the pro-British landed gentry who, since it was Choltān making this remark, might not have been sympathetic towards the Congress of Khilāfat-Non-cooperation days.

(iii) Deception of the peasants by the landed gentry.

In and around 1923 legislation had been proposed in the Provincial Council to protect the interests of the peasants. This had upset the landed class and some of them had formed associations such as the Prajā samiti (Association for the ryots) "to deceive the peasantry in an attempt to safeguard the interests of Jotdārs, Tālukdārs and Zemindārs." Choltān's editor had no objection to the landed class seeking to safeguard their own interests, but he did object strongly to this barefaced attempts to swindle the peasants.<sup>104</sup>

(iv) Bolshevism.

In 1921 Baṅgīya-Musalmān-Sāhitya-Patrikā warned the landed gentry to change its ways. Their speeches to the peasantry about franchise and democracy were awakening a genuine desire for

103. Editor, 'Moslem Līg', Choltān, ibid.

104. Editor, 'Prajā svattva āin', Choltān, 8th yr., 1st no.; 28th Bāisākh, 1330 B.S. p 11th May, 1923.

equality. "Will you as a man be able to mix with the peasants", a contributor in Baṅgīya-Musalmān-Sāhitya-patrikā asked, "...Can you look upon their hardships as your own?... The peasant of Bengal is a man, and his inner-man no longer wants to go on sleeping... He wants equal rights as a man." Therefore, further talk about the franchise and democracy would only lead to Bolshevism in Bengal.<sup>105</sup>

Later that same year Baṅgīya-Musalmān-Sāhitya-Patrikā issued a further warning to the landed gentry to give the labourer a just price for his labour, to increase the fertility of the peasant's land and to stop wasting on their own pleasures the crops produced by the peasant. "If Bolshevism ever takes root amongst the peasants of India", the Patrikā said, "then the responsibility for this will lie completely with the land-owning class. For it is they who by depriving their peasant-tenants of their freedom, their proprietorship, their rights and their interests are paving the way for revolution. They are the ones who have neglected their duties."<sup>106</sup>

Choltān, however, in 1923 seemed unaware even of the

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105. Abul Hossain, 'Bāṅglār Balśī', Baṅgīya-Musalmān-Sāhitya-Patrikā, 4th yr., 2nd no.; Śrabḍ, 1328 B.S. (1921).  
 106. Abul Hossain, 'Kṛṣi biplaber sūcanā', Baṅgīya-Musalmān-Sāhitya-Patrikā, 4th yr., 3rd no.; Kārtik, 1328 B.S. (1921).

existence of Bolsheviks in India.<sup>107</sup> In one of its December issues it condemned the Bolsheviks of Russia as enemies of religion and complete atheists stating that "the oppression of the Bolsheviks has reached a higher peak than that of the tyrannical Czar. If God does not protect Islam from these tyrannical oppressors then who else will?"<sup>108</sup> In an editorial comment on a speech by Lord Lytton (Governor of Bengal) Choltān avered: "We never approve of revolutionary thought, and Islam also does not support any kind of revolutionary thinking which is founded upon irreligiousness and oppression. Nor does it support murder, oppression or secret intrigues smelling of cowardice. In fact, we are completely unaware of there being any revolutionary thought or intrigue anywhere in India in these days of non-violence and non-cooperation... We fail to understand also, where in this land he [Lord Lytton] found the existence of Bolsheviks i.e. foreign conspirators, and attempts by them to spread revolution."<sup>109</sup>

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107. Initiation of Bolshevik ideas in India may be traced to earlier than 1920. And since 1921 attempts were made by M.N.Roy and others to organise Communist Party in India. The Party, however, started its activities in 1924.

108. Editor, 'Balśebhik gabarment o Mochalmān', Choltān, 8th yr., 29th no.; 21st Agrahāyan, 1330 B.S.; 7th December, 1923.

109. Editorial comment, Choltān, ibid.  
It may be noticed that though Choltān did not apparently favour the Gandhi-prescribed, passive and completely 'non-violent symbolic' satyāgraha, it, nevertheless, in contradistinction to Dhūmketu, would not sanction any form of 'revolutionary' or extremist politics either.

(v) The role of the western-educated contrasted with that of the Ulemā.<sup>110</sup>

"In Chittagong even at the height of the movement not a single one of the 20 or so Moslem B.L.s [Law graduates] in the district participated in the Khilāfat and Svarāj movements for which that district achieved the highest rating in all India", Choltān observed in June, 1923. "...I do not think we have a single highly-educated person in the Khilāfat and Svarāj movements in Dacca... There must be a least 200 pleaders and graduates in the 7 districts of the Rajshahi division, yet only one of these showed any enthusiasm for a few months." The Svarāj and Khilāfat movements were admittedly dangerous but the campaign to spread literacy was not. Yet not even in these spheres had any Moslem pleader or barrister or M.A. or B.A. come forward. "Is this not indicative of their lifelessness and impotence?"<sup>111</sup> Choltān asked.

Later that year Choltān demonstrated with statistics that during the Khilāfat and Svarāj movements throughout the whole of Bengal and Assam the Ulemā had suffered far more than the

110. For the Ulemā's role in Indian politics see also pp. 29-30.

111. 'Ucca śikṣār phal', Choltān, 8th yr., 7th no.; 7th Aṣārh, 1330 B.S.; 22nd June, 1923.

western-educated.<sup>112</sup> Hundreds of Ulemā had, in fact, suffered imprisonment, but not more than 3 or 4 of those highly educated in English. "Those who abandoned their law-practices and positions have eaten humble pie and begun to go home again like good boys. Can this be called national feeling or patriotism?" In regard to the Ulemā, however, the journal was full of praise: "I should say that if nationalism, love of religion, national sympathy and sense of patriotism exist in any group at the moment then it is amongst those old-fashioned people alone."<sup>113</sup>

(vi) Religious scruples about political developments.

Though many Moslem religious leaders joined the Khilāfat and Svarāj movements others had scruples about the various non-Islamic practices associated with the movements.<sup>114</sup> An

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112. Incidentally, the Khilāfat leadership with its rank and file were primarily Ulemā-dominated. The Ulemā association, Jamiyat-i-Ulemā-i-Hind could therefore claim a large share in reinforcing Svarāj agitations throughout the country. It may also be pointed out that Wāhābi and Fārāidi movements in the 19th century had been completely Ulemā sponsored as well.

113. Abul Kasem, 'Daśer Kathā', Choltān, 8th yr., 21st no.; 18th Āśvin, 1330 B.S.; 5th October, 1923.

114. It may be noted that the ideological foundation given to the concept of Svarāj was exclusively Hindu. "Gandhi, for instance, interpreted Svarāj as Rām Rāj, a historical memory which could not enthuse the Muslims." - A.R. Desai, Social Background of Indian Nationalism, 1956, p.366.

article in Islām-darśan, for example, in 1920 declared that strikes were not sanctioned by the šariyat and were thus forbidden and sinful; even though in favour of the Khilāfat meetings held, where pictures of śiva-temple and mosques were displayed, were declared to be hārām (forbidden); it was described as blasphemous to utter Bande mātaram ('hail to the mother land') in conjunction with "Allāhu Akbar [God is great], the sacred Kalimā of Allāh, the one sole God."<sup>115</sup>

Though like the League and the Khilāfat Committee it favoured collaboration between Moslems and Hindus, Islām-dārśan in 1921 declared itself unprepared to tolerate non-Islāmic practices on that account. It disapproved of Moslems chanting Bande mātaram and Mahātmā Gāndhi ki jāy (hail to Mahatma Gandhi). "We have nothing against Mr. Gandhi, who is the powerful leader of the present movement and the very embodiment of self-sacrifice and self-control. Nevertheless,

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115. Abdul Wadud B.A., 'Hārām o Kofar', Islām-darśan, 1st yr., 4th no.; Śrāvan, 1327, B.S. (1920). Bande mātaram is the title of a song in Bankimchandra's novel, Anandamath. Congress adopted it as the national anthem. Because of its associations with Hindu idolatry, however, Moslems were opposed to its being chanted as a national slogan. They had a cry of their own, they said: Allāhu Akbar. When Hindu-Moslem collaboration over non-cooperation and Khilāfat reached its peak, however, both Bande mātaram and Allāhu Akbar used to be uttered jointly. But this practice was not approved by the orthodox Moslems. Infra p.130.

we do not think it at all proper for Moslems to adulate any one but Āllāh and the Prophet."<sup>116</sup>

Islām-darśan in 1922 raised the question of Moslem nationality.<sup>117</sup> Unlike Moslem Bhārat, Islām-darśan believed that "each Moslem should bear in mind that for us Islam comes first, and our country second. Our religion is the primary consideration, our mother land the secondary. First and foremost we are Moslems. After that we are Indians or inhabitants of other countries. We desire the Khilāfat and Svarāj, but not at the expense of any portion of Islam. On the contrary by fully preserving Islam". Islām-darśan, therefore, condemned the non-Islamic practices and beliefs that had entered Moslem society as a result of the Khilāfat and Svarāj movements.<sup>118</sup>

A further report by the editor of Islām-darśan made perfectly clear what those non-Islamic practices and beliefs really were: "Alas! ignorant Moslems have under the influence of foolish Svadeśī Maolānās now lost their religion and faith and have begun in cooperation with Hindus at various meetings

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116. Editor, 'Khilāfat o Nan-Koapāreśan', Islām-darśan, 2nd yr., 6th no.; Āśvin, 1328 B.S. (1921).

117. Supra p. 95 f.n. 79.

118. Editor, 'Islām o bartamān āndolon', Islām-darśan, 2nd yr., 11th no.; Fālgun, 1328 B.S. (1922).

and conferences and Congress to worship Mother Cow, the statue of Tilak, the image of Mother India and of the goddess mounted on the lion. In imitation of Hindus, Moslems have now begun hanging up in their homes pictures of renowned national leaders from both the Hindu and Moslem communities, and offering homage and reverence to them. In a famous picture in the market place I saw 'Mother India' being humiliated at court in the form of the superbly beautiful Drāupadī. Duṣṣāsan in the form of the British Government was re-enacting her dis-robing by pulling her beautiful green śārī. Meanwhile in the guise of the five Pāṇḍavas Maolana Mohammad Ali, Shaokat Ali, Mr. C.R.Das, Lala Lajpat Roy and Pandit Motilal Nehru were poised in readiness to punish Duṣṣāsan with clubs, swords and bows and arrows. But Gandhi in the form of Śrīkṛṣṇa told them to desist and was himself engaged in supplying clothing for the beautiful woman in the form of Drāupadī from his 'carkā' [spinning-machine] in the form of the Sudarśan Cakra [emblem of Śrīkṛṣṇa]. The picture was entitled 'Svadeśī bastraharan' [Svadeśī disrobing]. I saw in another picture Mr. Gandhi in Br̥ndāban standing in Kṛṣṇa's famous 'tr̥bhāṅga' [three-curve] pose piping the flute of non-cooperation. Mohammad Ali, Shaokat Ali, Das [C.R.Das], Roy [Lajpat Roy] and Nehru [Motilal Nehru] etc. as young lads of Braja [Braja-bālakas]

or cow herd boys were engaged in a wild carkā-dance with such cow herd maidens [Braja-bālikās] as Baṅga Laks'mī and Bhārat Laks'mī. This one is probably called the Svadeśī dalliance in Brndāban or some such thing. Obviously it is not unnatural or surprising for Hindus to think up such pictures. But we were really mortified to see representations in these pictures of Mohammad Ali, Shaokat Ali and Abul Kalam [Azad] who bear the title of Maolānā... Not one iota of advancement will be achieved by the Moslems through a hundred thousand movements until they completely abandon contact with idolatry and fully follow Islam."<sup>119</sup>

(vii) Franchise for women.

In 1921, possibly in imitation of the votes for women campaign in England, an agitation had arisen amongst Bengalee women folk to acquire the franchise. Annesā was discouraging - it advised them to guide the voting of their husbands instead: "It is wrong to go outside one's capabilities".<sup>120</sup>

(c) Dissatisfaction with the British.

To add to the dissatisfaction over the Khilāfat the British had in 1923 instituted a Service Commission.<sup>121</sup> Choltān's

119. Editor, 'Islāme pāuttalikatā', Islām-darśan, ibid.

120. Sufia Khatun, 'Nārīr adhikār', Annesā, 1st yr., 7th no.; Kārtik, 1328 B.S. (1921).

121. This has reference to the Royal Commission appointed under the chairmanship of Lord Lee in 1923 to enquire into the question of pay and emoluments of the Superior Civil Services.

editor sarcastically commented, "A 'Service Commission', that is to say 'Commission to relieve hardship', has recently been set up. Its purpose is to alleviate hardship amongst poor white civilians by increasing their pay.... Since we are black men it is alright for our families to manage on 5 or 7 rupees, but how are these poor whites to manage on only 1,625 rupees a month?"<sup>122</sup>

## IV

1924-1928Worsening relations between Hindus and Moslems.<sup>123</sup>(i) 1924: Callapse of movements and disenchantment with leaders.

In 1924 Islām-darśan became jubilant over reported internal strife in Congress: the Svarājites were challenging Gandhi's leadership. "The days of Mr. Gandhi's undivided leadership are over", the paper commented, "his policy of non-violence...has been washed away in tides of violence. His ineffective non-

122. Editor, 'Sārbhis Kamiśan', Choltān, 8th yr., 28th no.; 14th Agrahāyan, 1330 B.S.; 30th November, 1923.

123. The break-up of Hindu-Moslem relations had already started with the Moplah troubles in 1921. It was followed by several communal clashes. Meanwhile Hindu communal organisations launched Suddhi-saṅgathan movements, to which Moslems retaliated by the similar formation of Tablig-Tānzim movements. In the political sphere Gandhi in 1922 called off Non-Cooperation campaign. The fianl blow came in 1924 when the Khilāfat movement collapsed. The Khilāfat and Non-cooperation were the only ones in which Hindu and Moslem masses jointly participated. So, with these unifying factors gone, the frustrated people, Hindus and Moslems alike, were left to their own devices. They looked on each other with distrust and hatred. Consequently, the years that followed was marked with serious communal troubles, involving  
(continued on next page....)

cooperation has vanished in the winds of cooperation....

People now feel the words of Mr. Gandhi to be tiresome, useless ravings and impossible fancies. And his much-prized, non-violent non-cooperation is now floating about the skies of India like the haziness of a dream made up <sup>^ of</sup> mere empty air."<sup>124</sup>

Choltān in 1924 deplored terrorism stating that it had been proved conclusively during the first Svadeśī movement that independence could not be gained by one or two clandestine murders.<sup>125</sup> "To re-enter that same path is not indicative of political good sense", Choltān avered.<sup>126</sup>

Islām-darśan in 1924, besides attacking Gandhi, also attacked Mr. C.R.Das (1870-1925) as a new comer to politics, a man of fragile and vacillating opinions, whose policies and approach were devoid of honesty, straightforwardness, experience and far-sightedness. "Similarity between what he says and does is extremely rare. When it came to deeds he failed to keep any of his pledges to the Moslems. Upon getting supreme power in the [Calcutta] Corporation he displayed to the full his

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(.....continued from previous page)

at least 69 riots between 1924 and 1926.

See also chapter on Hindu-Moslem Relations,

M.Mujeeb, The Indian Muslims, 1967, p.437 and B.N.Pandey, op.cit., pp.116-126.

124. Editor, 'Sabarmati samgrām-Mr. Gāndhīr patan', Islām-darśan, 4th yr., 2nd no.; Bhādra, 1331 B.S. (1924).

125. Supra pp. 80-82, 107 and infra p.140.

126. Editor, 'Abār pāglāmī', Choltān, 8th yr., 35th No.; 4th Māgh, 1330 B.S.; 18th January, 1924.

policy of grabbing for himself. He has opposed Moslem interests in the Council with all his might<sup>127</sup> - the two Moslem ministers [A.K.Fazlul Huq and A.K.Guznavi] have been forced to resign through the administrative reforms for Bengal being withdrawn due entirely to C.R.Das's envy, animosity and impetuosity."<sup>128</sup>

Earlier that year Islām-darśan published an Address (given by Syed Ismail Hossain Siraji) complaining Moslems had suffered far more than Hindus during Svadeśī and Non-cooperation movements: more Moslems than Hindus had given up Government jobs; the Moplāh (Moslem inhabitants of Malabar in South India) had become virtually extinct due to the Non-cooperation movement;<sup>129</sup> and in Salāngā in Sirajganj many Moslems had suffered untimely death. The Islamia College in Lahore and the Aligarh College, both dear to Moslems had suffered much during Non-cooperation, whereas Hindu institutions had been relatively unaffected; and in the Punjab and in Sind thousands of Moslems had fixed their homes and migrated to Afghanistan<sup>130</sup>

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127. For C.R.Das and the Moslem see J.H.Broomfield, Elite Conflict in a Plural Society, 1968, pp.244-257.

128. Al Faruk, 'Asahayoger abasān', Islām-darśan, 4th yr., 5th no.; Agrahāya, 1331 B.S. (1924).

129. See chapter on Hindu-Moslem Relations, p.168. Murray T.Titus, op.cit., p.34 and W.R.Smith, Nationalism and Reforms in India, 1938, pp.314-17.

130. Supra p.90 f.n.71.

thereby exposing themselves to great hardship. The Hindu community had suffered no comparable loss. "Moslems suffered immense losses through the use of indigenous textiles as well. Hindu and Mārwārī shop-keepers made huge profits by selling indigenous cloth at high prices. On the other hand, it was the Moslems who paid the penalty by buying coarse home-spun cloth at inflated prices."<sup>131</sup>

A few months later Islām-darśan declared, "Non-cooperation is dead". It had been born in Calcutta in 1920 and had died there in October, 1924. "It is doubtful whether even the next fifty years will remedy the utter decline in its [Moslem community] sense of nationhood, its principles and its religion and also the terrible catastrophe that fell upon the Indian Moslem community during those four years as a result of non-cooperation."<sup>132</sup>

The article goes on to attack the great Khilāfat leader Maolana Mohammad Ali: "...His policies, character and behaviour are characterised principally by a lack of self-control, intolerance, sensationalism and instability. Previously he was

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131. Ismail Hossain Siraji, 'Abhibhāṣan', Islām-darśan, 4th yr., 2nd no.; Bhādra, 1331 B.S. (1924).

132. Al Faruk, 'Asahayoger abasān', Islām-darśan, 4th yr., 5th no.; Agrabhāṣan, 1331 B.S. (1924).

a Moslem extremist and intensely anti-Hindu. Then during the non-cooperation period he inclined so greatly in favour of Hindus... Having now secured supreme power in Congress he is putting a knife to the throat of Moslem community and Islamic religion without any fear at all.... It is due to the speech and action of leaders, who are traitors to their own community and religion, and who are worshippers of Hindus, such as Mr. Mohammad Ali, Hakim Ajmal Khan and Doctor Ansari that the anti-Hindu feeling, which was previously extinguished, is being reawakened and intensified in the minds of Indian Moslems."<sup>133</sup>

(ii) 1925: Loyalty to British reviving:<sup>134</sup> League suspicious of Hindu political leaders.

"It has become fashionable to criticise the Government nowadays", Islam-darshan observed in 1925, "...but no matter how much the Government may be criticised it does not countenance any kind of oppression... No kind of despotism finds a place in

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133. Ibid.

134. It was natural that after the country-wide anti-government agitations ceased in 1924 agents seeking government patronage should come to the forefront. Such people came usually from amongst the landed gentry, the business community, higher government officials and the professional classes. Given their strong economic position and their support of the section of the Mullās they could easily hold sway over the already frustrated masses. Thus seizing their opportunity they now re-entered the political arena and attempted to re-fashion public opinion in favour of the Government in order to obtain their own self interests.

its policy. Even an ordinary beggar can take legal proceedings against it. Yet, ryots do not dare to do so against zemindars.... In regard to cow-slaughter most Hindu zemindars reach the pinnacle of oppressiveness in a most unjust way.... The leaders and highly educated of this country are either themselves mostly members of the zemindar class or strongly influenced by them... The first and primary duty of those who dream of Svarāj should be to apply themselves to the rectification of the deadly defects within themselves;; otherwise Svarāj under the zemindars will be even less popular with the general public than being ruled by the present Government."<sup>135</sup>

The same year Islām-darśan reported that fatwās (edicts) had been issued in Calcutta, Bombay and Delhi declaring the Khilāfat leaders, Maolana Abul Kalam Azad, Maolana Mohammaḍ Ali and Maolana Shaakat Ali to be infidels. These fatwās were, Islām-Darśan believed, perfectly justified. "Maolana Abul Kalam Azad both acted as pall-bearer for the late Chitta ranjan Das and supported the playing of music outside mosques; and Mohammaḍ Ali bowed his forehead at the feet of Mr. Gandhi. Their words and deeds contravened the Sariyat."<sup>136</sup>

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135. Sheikh Habibar Rahman Sahityaratna, 'Jamidār o Gabharṇment', Islām-darśan, 5th yr., 2nd no.; Agrahāyān, 1332 B.S. (1925).  
 136. Editor, 'Kāferī fatwā', Islām-darśan, 4th yr., 11th no.; Jyāaiṣṭha, 1332 B.S. (1925).

Some months later an editorial miscellany in Islām-darśan contained a eulogy of the scholarship and political acumen of Sir Abdur Rahim,<sup>137</sup> the Chairman at a recent session of the All-India Moslem League. Apparently Sir Abdur Rahim had spent much of his speech in unveiling the deceitfulness and hypocrisy of Hindu leaders. Islām-darśan commented: "By penetrating all the deceitfulness and hypocrisy of Hindu leaders Sir Abdur Rahim demonstrated to his fellow countrymen the way in which Hindu leaders under a cover of the Non-cooperation, Svarāj, Suddhi and Samgathan movements were wandering about the whole country igniting fires of animosity against Moslems, and how a group of Hindu leaders had become impatient and intolerant in their attempts either to initiate Moslems into Hinduism by 'purifying' (Suddha) them or, to drive and expel them from India."<sup>138</sup>

(iii) 1926: Moslems should participate in Congress in greater number.

"Would things be as they are", Saogāt asked in 1926, "if Moslems in greater number joined Congress and prevailed upon its

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137. Sir Abdur Rahim (b.1867) belonging to a zemindar family of Midnapore, Bengal started his career as a barrister in Calcutta High Court. Subsequently he was appointed Judge, Madras High Court and then Member to the Bengal Executive Council (1921-25). He was also Member, Bengal Legislative Council (1926-30) and Indian Legislative Assembly (1930).

138. Editor, 'Bibidha prasanga', Islām-darśan, 5th yr., 3rd no.; Pâuṣ, 1332 B.S. (1925).

leaders to accept their true opinions? We call upon Moslem society to consider these matters carefully. We may not see eye-to-eye with Congress, but that does not mean we should try to wreck it."<sup>139</sup>

(iv) 1927 and 1928: Moslems and Congress.

An article in the same journal in 1927, however, admitted that the charge of communalism made against Moslems by Hindus, who were trying to build up an all-India nation, was true. Moslems were deeply concerned about their own rights and interests as a community, and it was this concern which prompted them to seek separate electorates at all political levels.<sup>140</sup> Nevertheless, it was untrue to suppose that behind the present multifarious political activities of Indian Moslems there lay

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139. Editor, 'Bibidha prasāṅga', Saogāt, 4th yr., 5th no.; Kārtik, 1333 B.S. (1926).

140. The Moslem demand for separate electorates on the basis of self-determination was first raised in 1883 by Mohammad Yusuf, a member of the Bengal Legislative Council. Then in 1906 a Moslem deputation (Simla deputation) waited upon the Viceroy Lord Minto with specific demands that in all elections Moslems be separately represented and their representatives elected from purely Moslem constituencies. Furthermore, Moslem representation should be 'commensurate not merely with their numerical strength, but also with their political importance and the value of the contribution they make to the defence of the Empire.' Moslem demands for separate electorates were finally embodied in the Indian Councils Act of 1909. For controversy over separate electorates see pp.128-29.

any inordinate desire to hoist in India with the help of the Moslems of the newly-awakened Turkey, Afghanistan and Arabia the triumphant flag of Islam. Were any of these Moslem powers to establish a new regime in India then the benefits would go not "to Indian Moslems but to the Moslems of Turkey and Kabul." The article continued: "The political life of individual nations is in large measure similar to that of individual families...whenever the younger brother fails to get his own proper rights, he immediately claims to have his property separated from that of his elder brother... It is no more surprising that Moslems should quarrel with Hindus over their rights and existence than that a brother should quarrel with his brother. These things stem from the selfishness of Hindus. They arise from thoughts of Moslem consciousness and self-expression."<sup>141</sup> Thus it would seem that some Moslems by 1927 considered themselves outside the all-India nation being built by Congress.

The editor of Saogāt himself clearly did not agree with the sentiments of Mr. Yakub Ali Choudhury quoted in the article above; for in 1929 he stated unequivocally that though the Moslem League was the Moslem national organisation, it was,

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141. Yakub Ali Choudhury, 'Musalmāner sāmpradāyikatā o Hindur jātīyatā', Saogāt, 5th yr., 1st no.; Aṣārah, 1334 B.S. (1927).

nevertheless, merely representative of the Moslem community and not of any other community in India; as such, it was comparable in status to the Hindu Sabhā, the Sikh League and the Parsee Association. It was not, however, in opposition to Congress.<sup>142</sup> For, Congress was the over-all national organisation for the whole population of India. "The Moslem League is therefore merely a branch of the Congress." The function of the League was not to bring Moslem claims before Government, but to persuade Congress to do so. On the other hand, were the League to acquiesce in whatever Congress proposes, then there would be no need for the League. "Ultimately the raison d'être of the League is to fight with Congress over the putting forward of the just claims of Moslem community."<sup>143</sup>

Indeed, two months earlier, Saogāt's editor had maintained that rather than opt out of Congress, Moslems ought to fight for their rights in it. "It is up to us to come to an understanding with the Hindus, and the place for that is Congress. Once there, if necessary, we will argue, and if

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142. In spite of Saogāt's favouring of collaboration with Congress, the consensus of Moslem leaders was opposed to it. The last attempt to unite League and Congress foundered on the rock of Nehru Report (1928), which rejected Moslem demands for separate electorate: Subsequent history witnessed bitter League-Congress political rivalries, resulting eventually in partitioning the sub-continent.

143. Editor, 'Ebārkār Moslem Līg', Saogāt, 6th yr., 7th no.; Māgh, 1335 B.S. (1929).

need be, compromise. But there is no reason for letting fear of Hindus or anger against them keep us away from Congress....India is our mother land. The claims to her of both Hindus and Moslems are equal. So, neither fear of the Hindus nor resentment against them is going to make us give her up. We shall make room for ourselves here where we rightly and properly belong. Some may say that Congress is so Hindu-dominated that Moslems cannot possibly get their rightful say in it. Let us take Bengal first. If we wanted to, could we not get control of the Bengal Congress?"<sup>114</sup>

Clearly in 1928 the mood of Saogāt's editor was militant. In another expression of opinion on self-reliance he wrote, "We arrange meetings over Svarāj and independence, and shout ourselves hoarse. We strongly protest against the British for not giving us independence. This makes the British laugh. Because the thing is highly laughable. Svarāj and independence is not to be got by asking. No one can give it to anyone. It has to be taken by force. The British do not give us Svarāj because they say we are not fit for such a great task. And we arrange meetings and strongly protest

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<sup>114</sup>. Editor, 'Kāngres o Musalmān', Saogāt, 6th yr., 5th no.; Agraḥāyan, 1335 B.S. (1928).

against such statements by the British and we publish our protests in the newspapers. But are we really fit for Svarāj?"<sup>145</sup> The point about this discussion of Moslem relations with Congress is that the Simon Commission visited India twice in 1928-29 to investigate the workings of the Constitution established by the Government of India Act, 1919, and people were wondering whether the League should approach it directly, or through Congress, or even whether the Commission ought to be entirely boycotted because of the humiliation inherent in its mission of considering whether Indians were really fit to rule themselves.

## V

1928-1930

From Simon Commission to the preparation for the Round Table Conference

(i) 1928.

(a) Moslems urged to collaborate with the British.

It would seem that fear of the ascendancy of the Hindu community was in part responsible for an appeal by the editor of Moslem darpan to Moslems to collaborate with the British

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145. Editor, 'Atma nirbharātlatā', Saogāt, 6th yr., 5th no.; Agrahāyan, 1335 B.S. (1928).

Government in order to achieve parity with rival communities. "Otherwise their ascendancy will pollute your property, honour and lives and even your religion."<sup>146</sup> The editor reminded Moslems of the Prophet's ordinance that each Moslem was in duty bound to obey the king's command and to "respect his wishes, irrespective of personal pleasure, provided God's commandments are not thereby contravened". Instead, therefore, of creating unrest and destroying themselves in purposeless agitations against the Government via such movements as Svarāj, Congress and the Khilāfat Moslems were urged to strengthen their faith "by duly instituting in each village a branch of the Tablīg Mission."<sup>147</sup>

(b) Simon Commission.<sup>148</sup>

In March 1928 the Sāptāhik Saogāt reported on a large demonstration held in Calcutta to protest against the 'arrogance'

146. Compare the comment with that of Islām-pracāra's in 1903, supra p.64.

147. Editor, 'Grāhakder prati nibedan', Moslem darpan, 4th yr., 10th no.; October, 1928. Supra p.114 f.m. 123.

148. The Commission, appointed in November, 1927 with Sir John Simon as its chairman, was to investigate the working of the Constitution, established by the Government of India Act, 1919. Apparently because of its 'all white' composition, the Commission's visit in India provoked deep resentment among the people. Congress boycotted the Commission; the League was split, its more conservative group favouring the visit. Other orthodox Moslem bodies, too, welcomed the Commission. Infra pp.140-41; for Moslem reactions see also W.R. Smith, op.cit., pp.357-59.

of the British Parliament in appointing the Simon Commission "to test the fitness of Indians to rule themselves... On everyone's lips was 'Simon go home'.... The procession terminated at the Monument [Ochterlony Monument in Calcutta Maidan] where three huge meetings took place. At these meetings Mr. Subhash Chandra Bose and Mr. Jatindra Mohan Sen Gupta bellowed out the way in which the whole nation had reacted adversely towards the Commission."<sup>149</sup> One deduces, however, that the demonstration was held under Congress initiative and that the participants may well have been largely Hindu.

On the other hand, a large meeting of the Moslem Táblig Mission held in Calcutta on October 7, 1928 was reported by Moslem darpan to have unanimously resolved: Firstly, to express its readiness to cooperate with the Simon Commission and to urge Bengalee Moslems to do so; secondly, to beg the Commission and the India Government to retain separate electorates and enfranchise Hindu untouchables such as Māhiṣya, Bāgdī, Namah Sūdra and Rajbansī, thus enabling them to participate in the workings of District Board, Municipality, Corporation, Council, Assembly and so forth; thirdly, that

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149. Editor, 'Kalikātāy Sāiman-birodhī śobhāyātrā', Sāptāhik Saogāt, 1st yr., 36th no.; 11th March, 1928.

Svarāj was at present disadvantageous to Moslems and would in present circumstances drop them "into the clutches of powerful Hindus", and fourthly, that the Tablīg Mission protested strongly against the Nehru Report<sup>150</sup> and publicly condemned those Moslems who had, against the interests of their community, voted in favour of abolishing separate electorates for Moslems in regard to legislative assemblies.<sup>151</sup>

(c) Separate electorates intensify communalism.

Saogāt, however, in 1928 did not agree with the Tablīg Mission in its support for separate electorates. On the contrary, Saogāt maintained that separate electorates intensified communalism. "They compel candidates to appeal to the communal feelings of voters in order to win the election."<sup>152</sup>

Therefore, from the point of view of the overall welfare of the nation which depended in large measure upon intercommunal harmony separate electorates were undesirable. And both the All-India Moslem League and the Bengal Provincial Moslem League had, according to Saogāt, opted for joint or mixed electorates.<sup>152</sup> The only point in favour of separate

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150. The Nehru Report, prepared by a Congress-appointed committee under Motilal Nehru, was submitted in August, 1928. Since it rejected Moslem demands for separate electorates and offered joint electorates instead, the Report was objected to by Moslem bodies.

151. Editor, 'Sabhā saṃbād', Moslem darpan, 4th yr., 10th no.; October, 1928.

152. See also B.N.Pandey, op.cit., p.124.

electorates was their safeguarding communal interests. But Saogāt maintained, "we feel it is sufficient for this purpose to specify the number of Moslem members."<sup>153</sup>

(d) The Ulemā had done most to awaken Moslem consciousness.

In 1928 the editor of Māsik Mohāmmadī reaffirmed an earlier view that it had been the Ulemā who had done most to awaken Moslems and who had suffered most in the cause of independence. Many had been transported, hung or had died in open combat.<sup>154</sup> "It was the Ulemā of India who breathed life into the non-cooperation and Svarāj movements. Like fair weather friends the English-educated deserted the field and disappeared within a couple of days."<sup>155</sup> Admittedly one or two Pīrs and Maolvīs had opposed the Svarāj and nationalist movements, but, Māsik Mohāmmadī maintained, in such instances they were being manipulated by the English-educated well-to-do who had persuaded them that "Congresswālās are a 'crowd of devils dressed in Khādī' [Indigenous cloth hand-woven from hand-spun thread] and out to destroy the Moslems..." "Actually it is the Mullās", Māsik Mohāmmadī

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153. Editor, 'Svatantra nirbācan maṇḍalī', Saogāt, 6th yr., 2nd no.; Bhādra, 1335 B.S. (1928).

154. This refers to the Wāhābī freedom movement - and the Wāhābīs' eventual suffering at the hands of the British.

155. Supra pp. 08-09.

concluded, "who have given birth to political consciousness in Asia."<sup>156</sup> And even now such people as Aga Ma'idul Islam<sup>157</sup> and Maolana Abul Kalam Azad are reputed to be the greatest political experts in the East."<sup>158</sup>

(e) Bande Mātaram objectionable to Moslems.<sup>159</sup>

The editor of Sariyate Eslām that same year brought up another old theme, namely the singing by Moslems of Bande Mātaram at joint Hindu-Moslem meetings and functions. This was objectionable and clearly opposed to Islam. Fortunately, Sariyate Eslām maintained, the editor of The Muslimmān Maolvi Mujibar Rahman had, therefore, submitted to the national committee of Congress a proposal to cease singing Bande Mātaram at its meetings.<sup>160</sup>

(f) A Royal Commission on Agriculture<sup>161</sup> wasting India's money.

Despite the fact that the independence movement was now

156. Māsik Mohāmmadi here refers to the contributions made by Jamaluddin Afghani (1839-97) and his followers to spreading the Pan-Islamic movement throughout Asia.

157. Aga Maidul Islam Syed Jalduddin Al Husseni was a journalist cum politician from Persia. Due to his revolutionary political views he was exiled by the Shah. At the time of Balkan War (1912) he fled to India and started publishing his paper Hāblul Matīn from Calcutta.

158. Editor, 'Mollā-prabhāber anīṣṭakaritā', Māsik Mohāmmadi, 1st yr., 9th no.; Aṣār, 1335 B.S. (1928).

159. Supra p. 110 f.n. 115.

160. Editor, 'Bande Mātaram', Sariyate Eslām, 3rd yr., 11th no.; Agrahāyan, 1335 B.S. (1928).

161. The Commission was appointed in 1926 to make an extensive enquiry into Indian agriculture and to suggest recommendations for its improvement.

reaching its peak, relatively little anti-British propaganda was published by the Moslem press in Bengal. The one or two direct criticisms of Government actions seem, on the contrary, entirely justified and of the type that ought probably to have been made regardless of whether India was seeking independence or not. In 1928, for example, Saogāt's editor criticised the lavish Government expenditure on a Royal Agricultural Commission whose seven members had managed to spend 14 lacs of rupees on a tour of Europe gathering information that was too self-evident to need saying.

"The real point, however, is", Saogāt's editor declared, "the bureaucracy is not in the least interested in improving the condition of agriculturists. If they were, then the Government, which can spend 14 lacs of rupees on a single Commission would not be so niggardly in regard to the health and education of the people of this country; it would not refuse to spend a single penny on proposals of village-reconstruction and it would not display such indifference towards the movement to abolish the zemindary system."<sup>162</sup>

(g) Deceitful zemindars and foolish peasants.

"The peasants of Bengal are so stupid", Sariyate Eslām observed, "that they have made their zemindars their

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162. Editor, 'Kṛṣi kāmīśaner riport', Saogāt, 6th yr., 1st no.; Srābaṇ, 1335 B.S. (1928).

representatives. Some of them voted for their zemindars out of fear, some out of avarice and some out of respect. But the zemindars have slaughtered them. To preserve their own interests they voted against the peasantry and tightened the iron chains upon their feet."<sup>163</sup>

Sariyate Eslām was referring to the Amendment (1928) in Tenancy Act made by the Bengal Legislative Council which was reported in the same month as the above article appeared, by Saogāt.

According to Saogāt the sole right granted tenants by the Amendment was the free right to transfer land. Though tenants had not enjoyed this right before, with the zemindar's permission they had in practice been able to buy and sell land throughout the country for some considerable time. The amended Act legalised this practice, provided that 20 per cent. of the selling price was given to the zemindar as Selāmī (landlord's fee to be given as a mark of respect).<sup>164</sup> "This provision is unfair... The law has never recognised the zemindar's rights to such selāmīs. They are not mentioned in

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163. Rafiquddin Ahmad, B.L., 'Bāmlār prajāsvattva āin o Sarājyadaler kīrti', Sariyate Eslām, 3rd yr., 9th no.; Āsvīn, 1335 B.S. (1928).

164. See also Radhakamal Mukherji (ed.), Economic Problems of Modern India, Vol.I, 1939, p.221.

the Act of Permanent settlement, nor are they provided for in the revised Act of 1885". Apparently zemindars paid the Government slightly more than 2.5 crores of rupees, but to do so they collected from their 'rāyat's (tenants) a little less than 14 crores. In addition to this, they illegally extracted various kinds of gifts, levies and contributions to festivals. Consequently, Saogāt commented, "There was no logical reason for further increasing by law the income of people who already extract 14 crores of rupees on behalf of the Government. Who can tell us why it was that this method of exploiting tenants was nevertheless legalised?"<sup>165</sup>

The editor of Mofājīn the following month indicated that in fact the ammended Act gave the tenant one or two other minor rights besides the free right to sell his land. According to Mofājīn, however, the first option to buy belonged to the zemindar; i.e. within two months of the transfer of the land the zemindar could, if he so wished, buy the land himself at 10 per cent. more than the sale price. This option in effect enabled the zemindar to compel either the buyer or seller to hand over the 20 per cent. selāmī; for in the last resort he could always acquire the land

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165. Editor, 'Prajāsvattva āin', Saogāt, 6th yr., 3rd no.; Āsvin, 1335 B.S. (1928).

himself, despite the fact that in the meantime the purchaser might actually have cultivated it. Thus "though the tenant has been given the free right to sell his land he still has no way of escaping from the zemindar". "Now everyone can easily appreciate the extent to which ordinary tenants have been either benefitted or harmed by the amending of the Land Tenancy Act."<sup>166</sup>

(h) India could choose Bolshevism if it liked.

According to Saogāt, the Government never let slip a single opportunity of abusing Russia's Soviet Government. It was, however, pointless to frighten people with statements like "the Russians are revolutionaries" and "they favour the creation of social disorder". There was no reason to suppose that Indians were so infatuated with Russians as to wish to invite either the Russians themselves, or their system of Government to India. There was, therefore, no need to abuse the Russian Government. Indians desired only the welfare of their country and would, if possible, institute whatever system of Government seemed likely to achieve the overall welfare of the country. If the Soviet system were the best, then what reason was there why they should not adopt it?<sup>167</sup>

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166. Editor, 'Prajāsvattva āin', Moyājjin, 1st yr., 3rd no.; Kārtik, 1335 B.S. (1928).

See also Radhakamal Mukherji, op.cit., p.229.

167. Editor, 'Sobhiyeṭ sarkārer prajāśāsan', Saogāt, 6th yr., 4th no.; Kārtik, 1335 B.S. (1928).

- (i) Independence would not be gained by economic sanctions against Manchester.

"India's desire to achieve Dominion-status can never be fulfilled by boycotting foreign goods." Saogāt's editor said, "Even those who advocate this demand, including Mahatmaji [Mr. Gandhi] himself, regard the status as equivalent to full independence. If this be so, it will never be attained by economic sanctions against the textile manufacturers of Manchester...such means might achieve some further administrative reform, but not the grant of Dominion-status, let alone full independence." Boycott was at best merely revenge against exploiters. Over-enthusiasm for home-spun cloth (Khaddar) could in the long run militate against people's interests. For it was impossible to go on forever buying cloth at four times the price of mill-textiles. Consequently Saogāt concluded, "If we desire to attain genuine rights, then we must become self-supporting in textiles."<sup>168</sup>

- (ii) 1929-30: Growing distrust of Hindu movements and motives.

- (a) Moslems apathetic about Svadeśī, even distrust it.<sup>169</sup>

According to Saogāt 'a group of low-minded individuals' were trying to dissociate Moslems from the Svadeśī movement.

168. Editor, 'Bilāṭī bastra barjan', Saogāt, 6th yr., 7th no.; Māgh, 1335 B.S. (1929).

169. For earlier references in this regard see pp.72-75, 102-03.

They had discovered in the Boycott movement 'profit for Hindus' and 'loss for Moslems' and were baiting their uneducated co-religionists with these slogans. This factor, added to the apathy of Indian Moslems who, Saogāt maintained, never participated in great numbers in any project promoting the welfare of their society and country, was damping their enthusiasm for the Svadeśī movement. "Rural Hindus and Moslems", Saogāt concluded "will cease using foreign goods, only when it is explained to them, how people of all communities will benefit from keeping the country's wealth within the country, and how it is that our poverty, and the misery and shortages consequent upon it, are increasing due to the country's wealth being drained abroad."<sup>170</sup>

(b) Civil disobedience aimed at Hindu objectives.

"If Mr. Gandhi's movement [Civil disobedience movement]",<sup>171</sup> Sariyate Eslām wrote in 1930, "had been genuinely peaceful and intended to achieve the good of both Hindus and Moslems, then before proceeding with it he would first of all have consulted Moslem opinions,...safeguarded their interests fairly

170. Editor, 'Bilāṭī barjjan o Muslim samāj', Saogāt, 7th yr., 8th no.; Cāitra, 1336 B.S. (1930).

171. This refers to the Civil Disobedience Movement launched in March, 1930 by Gandhi, aimed at 'paralysing the British Government in India by the mass performance of specific illegal acts.' Moslems, however, did not, on the whole, take part in it; it was primarily a Hindu affair.

and put an end to communal strife. But instead of that he proceeded in a very Hindu way to achieve Hindu objects alone...

"...Sleeping Moslems!...take care while time remains, - save yourselves and your community. Do not join this disobedience movement by being tricked by Congress into an infatuation for their bogus freedom... Because the main purpose of their movement is not independence, but rather the laying of the foundation for Hindu independence. It is merely an open plot to crush the Moslems."<sup>172</sup>

(c) Congress - a Hindu Institution.

As you will have seen from the previous editorial comment, and from that that is to follow, Sariyate Eslām was definitely taking a strong anti-Congress line in sharp contra-distinction to Saogāt. "Congress is nothing but a Hindu institution," Sariyate Eslām declared, "An analysis of its activities will demonstrate that it is another manifestation of the Hindus' Moslem-crushing mentality... The net of intrigue being spread throughout India by this crowd of Hindu Congressites, Svarājīs and revivalists in a united effort to wipe Moslems off the face of India is perilous in the extreme... The riots in Calcutta, Kulkāñhi, Pabna and Palāśipārā are a flagrant proof

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172. Editor, 'Ain amānya', Sariyate Eslām, 5th yr., 3rd no.; Cāitra, 1336 B.S. (1930).

of this... So unless the Moslems put up a fair fight for themselves, their religion and community, instead of just lying there and taking a beating, no one will be able to save them, let alone the Government. To our fellow Moslems we therefore say: sleep no more, a life and death crisis is at hand."<sup>173</sup>

(d) Congress not fully representative: only educated and landed gentry really represented by it.

On the other hand, however, Saogāt's editor was constantly out to improve Congress's position by warning it if necessary of its own inadequacies. In one such warning Saogāt maintained that Congress could now claim to represent merely the rich, the landed gentry and the educated minority. It had still not earned the right to lead the workers and peasants. The working class had formed Trade Unions, the younger generation Freedom Movements and the peasants too were trying to organise themselves. "Unless Congress accepts and advocates the demands emerging from these various organisations", Saogāt's editor concluded, "it will one day be driven to ally itself with Government."<sup>174</sup>

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173. Editor, 'Dhākār dāngā', Sariyate Eslām, 5th yr., 2nd no.; Fālgun, 1336 B.S. (1930).

174. Editor, 'Kamgres o mantrīva', Saogāt, 6th yr., 11th no.; Jyāiṣṭha, 1336 B.S. (1929).

(e) Moslems ought to participate in the Freedom movement.

In a further article that year Saogāt again attempted to inveigle Moslems into joining the Freedom movement. India was bound one day to sever her foreign fetters. Would Moslems who had remained aloof from the movement then "be able to hold out their hands and receive like charity the freedom earned by others?"<sup>175</sup>

(f) Moslems do all the suffering.

On the other hand, Sariyate Eslām in 1930 maintained that the boycott of schools and colleges had harmed Moslems most.<sup>176</sup> Moslem students were poor and they had to suffer much hardship in order to study. But now their studies were being jeopardised by scheming Congressites.<sup>177</sup> The closure of educational institutions and the turning of young men by the thousand into tramps and increasing the unemployment rate and the number of thieves and bandits would not bring Svarāj. But it might well open the door to the impoverishing of the backward Moslem community. And this, Sariyate Eslām's editor implied, seemed to be what lay behind the machinations

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175. Abul Fazal, 'Baṅga-Muslim nārī jāgaran', Saogāt, 7th yr., 5th no.; *paus*, 1336 B.S. (1929).

176. The comment here refers to the boycott on educational institutions during both the earlier Svadeśī and the later Non-cooperation agitations.

177. This refers to the Congress-inspired Civil Disobedience volunteers, who created disorder by strikes and pickets in educational institutions.

of the scheming Congressites.<sup>178</sup>

(g) Terrorism deplored.<sup>179</sup>

Government weakness over the partition of Bengal in 1911 (i.e. annulment of the partition) was, in the editor of Sariyate Eslām's opinion, one of the reasons for the increase in bomb-throwing, (i.e. terrorist activities). The Government ought not to have been intimidated into rendering the partition of Bengal an unsettled fact. India would, however, get nothing but loss from terrorism. All genuine well-wishers of India were opposed to it.<sup>180</sup>

(h) The Simon Commission Report published.

The publication of the Simon Commission Report (June, 1930) was not welcomed by Saogāt. "The political structure it envisages for India", observed Saogāt, "can not be called self-Government". Infinite powers had been invested in Provincial Governors, who were in effect responsible only to the Viceroy, who in turn was obliged to act in accordance with the Secretary for India in Britain. Consequently, it was the Secretary for India himself who through manipulating the

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178. Editor, 'Pikeṭim', Sariyate Eslām, 5th yr., 7th no.;  
Śrāban, 1337 B.S. (1930).

179. It may incidentally be mentioned that once again terrorism in politics raised its head in and around 1930.  
For earlier press-comment on terrorism see pp. 80-82.

180. Editor, 'Bomā o biplab', Sariyate Eslām, 5th yr., 9th no.;  
Āśvin, 1337 B.S. (1930).

Provincial Governors would continue to rule India. 'Even from the point of view of Moslem communal interests' the proposals of the Simon Commission were unsatisfactory. The principle of separate communal electorates had been preserved, but in no province had the majority status of Moslems been recognised. It looked as if the Commission had deliberately turned down all the special demands of the Moslems "with the express purpose of giving a proper lesson to all those Moslem gentlemen who ignored the public opinion of both Hindus and Moslems and eagerly cooperated with the Simon Commission."

Saogāt hoped that Moslem leaders would now have realised their error in failing to collaborate with the Hindu community. The journal, however, concluded by saying that the Commission had failed to fulfil the aspirations of all people in India irrespective of their communal identities, and so "unless its Report is greatly amended, it will not be considered acceptable to either the people of India as a whole, or to any of its constituent communities."<sup>181</sup>

- (i) Dissatisfaction with political leaders from the landed Gentry.

"Even the greatest moderates have now realised in their

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181. Editor, 'Sāiman riport', Saogāt, 7th yr., 9th-10th no.; Baiśākh-Jyāiṣṭha, 1337 B.S. (1930).

hearts", Māsik Mohāmmadī declared, "what a great farce our administrative reforms, Legislative Assemblies, 'Indian Parliament' and so forth really are. Uptil now Congress leaders have been persistently striving to placate the land-owning classes of India. But it is to be hoped that from now on their eyes will have been opened by the kind of language in which 200 Bengalee zemindars under the leadership of Mahārājā Thākur [Maharaja Pradyot Kumar Singh Tagore] displayed their mentality at this critical time. Moslem leaders too will now probably have realised after a proper study of the terrible events in Peshawar that it would no longer be possible for them to retain their leadership of Moslem society by proclaiming Government triumphs in their old servile way... And now the nationalist leaders will probably have been able fully to appreciate how necessary and beneficial genuine collaboration between Hindus and Moslems would be in regard to engaging in more serious political endeavours and in regard to achieving thereby their hoped-for objectives."<sup>182</sup>

The point seems to be that people were beginning to realise that the zemindar class was out to protect its own interests alone and that ultimately neither they nor the British cared

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182. Editor, 'Deśer abasthā', Māsik Mohāmmadī, 3rd yr., 8th no.; Jyāiṣṭha, 1337 B.S. (1930).

much for instituting democratic Government in India. The interests of the landed gentry were in fact more allied to the alien British than to those of their less fortunate fellow countrymen.

(j) Round Table Conference.

1. Lackeys must not be invited.

According to Saogāt, every single community in India had boycotted the Simon Commission,<sup>183</sup> because it did not contain a single Indian member. To console Indians the British Government was, therefore, arranging a Round Table Conference.<sup>184</sup> Success seemed unlikely. On the one hand, neither the moderates nor the extremists in India would be satisfied with anything less than full self-government, yet on the other, the Round Table Conference would be attended by anti-Indian Conservative and Liberal representatives, who

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183. This, it would seem, was Saogāt's wishful thinking: at least the conservative group in the Moslem League under Sir Muhammad Shafi and the Moslem Tablig Mission supported the Commission. Supra, pp. 126-27.

184. The Conference was designed to draw up a new constitution for India. With this purpose three sessions were held in London in 1930-32 between the representatives of the United Kingdom, British India and the Indian States. The Congress boycotted the Conference, but it went ahead with cooperation from the Liberals, Hindu Communal bodies, Moslem leaders and Indian Princess. The first Round Table Conference met in November, 1930 continuing till January, 1931.

were opposed to the institution of fully responsible Government in India. "So what", Saogāt asked, "is the outcome of the Round Table Conference to be?... We know that the Government can, if it wishes, send to London a pack of lackeys, but it is to be hoped that the Government is not unaware of the standing of such lackeys in the eyes of the people of this country. If they come back from England rejoicing over some tawdry bauble they have brought, the people of India will never be taken by it, and consequently the purpose of the London Conference will also have failed. If the British Government genuinely wishes to pacify the political mood of the Indian people then they must accede to the demands of those who are the true representatives of India. It will not do just to invite a pack of lackeys to London and give them a good time."<sup>185</sup>

## 2. Moslems must attend.

Māsik Mohāmmadī in 1930 reported on a meeting of the Bengal Moslem Conference held under the leadership of Sir Abdur Rahim at the Town Hall in Calcutta, where 'the most important' proposal discussed was the one, concerning the Round Table Conference. The meeting felt that the Simon

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185. Editor, 'Gol ṭebil bāiṭhak', Saogāt, 7th yr., 9th-10th no.; Bāiśākh-Jyāiṣṭha, 1337 B.S. (1930).

Commission had disregarded Moslem demands and cruelly spurned their self-respect. While making editorial comments on the proceedings of the meeting, Māsik Mohāmmadī concluded that "it would be virtually suicidal for Moslems to remain aloof from the Round Table Conference" for two reasons: firstly, the Conservative and Liberal representatives in Britain were determined to support the Simon Commission Report; and secondly, even if Congress failed to attend, many able Hindu representatives from the Hindu Sabhā together with Moderates would certainly attend and would not hesitate to oppose the just demands of the Moslems. It was therefore essential that Moslem representatives be present.<sup>186</sup>

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186. Editor, 'Mochlem Kanfārens', Māsik Mohāmmadī, 3rd yr., 11th no.; Bhādra, 1337 B.S. (1930).

## Chapter III

Hindu-Moslem Relations

Chronologically this chapter of necessity follows more or less the same pattern as the two previous ones, the period from 1888 to 1930 being broken up into the following phases:

- I 1888 to 1909;
- II 1909 to 1920;
- III 1919 to 1923 and
- IV 1923 onwards.

During phase I, though some highly sophisticated Moslems were aware of a need for harmony with the neighbouring Hindu community, most Moslems tended, our extracts seem to suggest, to see faults on the Hindu side alone; to be suspicious of Congress; and to be somewhat intransigent in rejecting suggestions by moderates to amend their behaviour in order to accommodate Hindus. From 1909 to 1920 moderates and other politically conscious Moslems continued to advocate Hindu-Moslem harmony, but the attainment of it was impeded by an increasing consciousness amongst Moslems of the grounds of communal friction, namely the tendency of Hindus to monopolise jobs in Government service and self-governing bodies like the Calcutta Corporation; the exploitation of Moslems by Hindu

money-lenders, and interference by Hindu Zemindars in the religious practices of Moslems. During phase III, 1919 to 1923, collaboration was in the air chiefly due to the agitation of Moslems over the Khilāfat question; but during phase IV, after the collapse of the Non-cooperation and Khilāfat movements, there was from 1923 onwards an accelerating decline in Hindu-Moslem relations culminating in riots.

The spectrum of opinion in Bengal during the period of our study was wide. For our purposes, however, it will suffice to bear in mind the following groupings:

- a) Moderate Hindus;
- b) Militant Hindus, whose nationalism was built on religious symbols;
- c) Orthodox Moslems, suspicious of Hindu-Moslem harmony, and quick to be offended by any non-Moslem practices; and
- d) Moderate Moslems, eager to play down communal differences in the interests of Bengal and India as a whole.

This fourth group (d) was characterised by a rational almost secular approach. All they said was sound common sense and, had their outlook been more widespread, it is possible that a Bengalee or All-India nationhood might have resulted.

Unfortunately, a rational, secular outlook was open to interpretation - possibly even a forced interpretation - by fanatics as irreligiousness. It could, therefore, all too easily be condemned as such. The fact of the matter is, we think, that during a period of nationalist agitation for an increasing say in the control of India's affairs by the people of the sub-continent, prejudice and fanaticism were at a premium. No nationalist movement can succeed without deep feelings being stirred, brought to the boil, and kept simmering. Prejudice and fanaticism provide excellent fuel for such a purpose. Rationalism and secularism, on the other hand, have a cooling effect. Such cooling would deprive almost any nationalist movement of any hope of success. Thus, much as we might personally admire and sympathise with the semi-secular rationalists of this period, we have tended to regard them tragically as idealistic dreamers whispering in a whirlwind.

## I

### 1888-1909

- (a) Plea for harmony: tendency to see evil on Hindu side and to be suspicious of Congress.<sup>1</sup>

In 1903 Islam-pracāra alleged that the Hindus were both

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1. See also Chapter on 'Politics', pp. 68-69, 75.

ungrateful and arrogant. Once during Moslem rule they had enjoyed Moslem favour: now they had forgotten that. They now hated the Moslems - even Congress members did so; "only when Hindus realise that Moslems are related to them ~~are~~ ~~and~~ their neighbours, and that for a long time they have enjoyed Moslem favour, will this animosity of theirs to their own fellow-countrymen cease. Realising the fundamental need for Moslem energy to uplift India they will of their own accord invite us to join them."<sup>2</sup> That same year Naba Nur pleaded with Hindu intellectuals and leaders to prove not only in words but in deeds also that they genuinely desired the welfare of the Moslems; Hindus were to abandon hypocrisy and embrace Moslems as brothers. Otherwise, Congress and conferences were in vain.<sup>3</sup>

One of the difficulties perplexing Hindu-Moslem relations was government employment.<sup>4</sup> Even as early as 1898 Kohinur had hinted that Hindus predominated in government posts and

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2. Sheikh Fazlal Karim, 'Unnatir upāy ki', Islām-pracārak, 5th yr., 5th-6th no.; Jyāaiṣṭha-āṣārh, 1310 B.S. (1903).
  3. Editor, 'Mātrbhāṣā o Baṅgīya Musalmān', Naba Nur, 1st yr., 9th no.; Paus, 1310 B.S. (1903).
  4. For the employment position of Moslems vis-a-vis the Hindus, see W.W.Hunter, Indian Musalmans, 1871, pp.163-68; G.H.Philips (ed.), The Evolution of India and Pakistan, Vol.IV, 1964, pp.558-59; and also J.H.Broomfield, Elite Conflict in a Plural Society, 1968, pp.10, 44.

were obstructing Moslems from getting promotion.<sup>5</sup> But, Kohinur maintained, "Everyone favours people from his own community".<sup>6</sup> In 1903 Naba Nur quoted the most recent census report (1901) showing the proportions of Hindus and Moslems educated in English, and 'how far behind Moslems are' "in regard to government employment-

<u>Government post</u>	<u>Total no.</u>	<u>Moslem</u>
HightCourt Judge	3	1
District and Session Judge	10	2
Sub-Judge	62	1
Munsiff	343	18
Provincial Judge	3	X
Additional Judge	7	X

5. Moslems were apparently conscious of their position vis-a-vis Hindus in regard to Government service even as early as 1869, when Durbān, a Persian journal, commented, "All sorts of employment, great and small, are being gradually snatched away from the Muhammadans, and bestowed on men of other races, particularly the Hindus." (As quoted in Hunter, op.cit., p.172.) The vernacular Bengali Moslem press took up the matter some 20 years later. Meanwhile, by the first decade of 20th century, an overall economic crisis had set in. Even for the already-advanced Hindus job opportunities shrank. Thus, as Moslems were then pressing for a fair share of Government jobs, communal bitterness became inevitable. Moslems felt that the Government's previous pro-Hindu attitude, coupled with subsequent anti-Moslem designs by Hindus, had deprived them of their just entitlements.

For further reactions see pp.173-75.

6. Mir Mosharaf Hossain, 'Sat prasanga', Kohinur, 1st yr., 3rd no.; Bhādra, 1305 B.S. (1898).

Deputy Magistrate and Collector	529	76
High Court Lawyer	215	11 <sup>7</sup>

A little later that year Naba Nur complained that Hindus were stopping Moslems from getting government jobs. This was jeopardising hopes of Hindu-Moslem unity: "It has been proved in practice that Moslem officials are not inferior to Hindus in efficiency. Yet the oppression of Hindu officials makes it difficult for Moslems to get on in the initial stages. When they saw that their monopoly was being broken, Hindus strove with redoubled zeal to make out that Moslem officials were stupid...why go on uselessly trying to create unity if our Hindu brethren feel so upset as soon as one or two Moslems get a job alongside hundreds and hundreds of Hindus?"<sup>8</sup>

A further impediment to unity was the term Yavana.<sup>9</sup> In 1903 Naba Nur raised the question of whether or not this referred exclusively to Moslems and whether in fact it was abusive. Apparently Akshay Kumar Maitreya (1861-1930) had written an article in Baṅga darśan (Bhādra, 1309 B.S./1902 A.D.)

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7. Mirza Abul Fazal, 'Prādeśik Musalmān śikṣā samiti', Naba Nur, 1st yr., 4th no.; Śrābaṅ, 1310 B.S. (1903).
  8. Editorial, Naba Nur, 1st yr., 8th no.; Agrahāyaṅ, 1310 B.S. (1903).
  9. See chapter on Literature, pp. 200-02.

on the origin of the term. His findings failed to satisfy Naba Nur: "We Moslems shall continue to take it as a terrible term of abuse until the real meaning of the word 'yavana' has been settled".<sup>10</sup> Kohinur a few months later grew sarcastic. It regarded the use of the term 'yavana' as an attempt to oust Moslems ("the 'yavana' clan") from India with the pen instead of the sword. Hindus "whiningly and brazenly" expected Moslems to like them despite using this term "yavana" which infuriated Moslems. Kohinur concluded, "If you still have not realised that 'internal dissension is the root of ruination then...harmony between Hindus and Moslems...will remain a mid-day reverie."<sup>11</sup>

Writing in 1905 Islam-pracārak argued that historical circumstances had now rendered Hindus and Moslems brothers in subjection. They ought, therefore, to unite in the service of 'Mother India'. Unfortunately most Hindus despised Moslems. Hindus on the whole might be advanced and cultured, but not all of them were. Similarly, though many Moslems

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10. Aftabuddin Ahmad, 'Hindu lekhak o Musalmān samāj, Naba Nur, 1st yr., 6th no.; Āsvin, 1310 B.S. (1903).

11. Manuyar Hoosain, 'Māsik sāhitya samālocanā', Kohinur, 5th yr., 11th-12th no.; Fālgun-Cāitra, 1311 B.S. (1905).

might be backward and illiterate, not all of them were.

Therefore, there was no reason to regard Moslems as contemptible inferiors: "I hope every Hindu brother will read this attentively, and, instead of regarding us with contempt or dislike, will embrace us with genuine brotherly love".<sup>12</sup>

In 1907 Islām-pracāraḥ complained that Hindus were out to set up svarāj "by vile means". Their lies and unfair means had undermined religion and morality and alienated the Moslems.

Seven crores of Moslems could not be considered negligible.

Had Hindus treated them fairly and with respect, they would

as fellow-countrymen have supported their cause: "Now

Moslems consider British dominance in India a thousand times preferable to Hindu dominance."<sup>13</sup>

In 1908 Islām-pracāraḥ alleged that, on the one hand, Hindus called Moslems brothers whilst on the other hand, Hindu zemindars were dreadfully oppressing Moslems and interfering with their religious practices, such as 'korbānī' (sacrifice of animals as enjoined by Islam): "Moslems are now well aware of the hypocrisy in Hindu protestations of friendship and brotherhood". Islām-pracāraḥ, therefore, rejoiced over the apparent failure of the

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12. Osman Ali, 'Satyai ki Musalmān ghrṇār pātra?', Islām-pracāraḥ, 6th yr., 10th no.; Māgh, 1311 B.S. (1905).

13. Ebne Ma'az, 'Bhārater bartamān rājnāitik abasthā o Musalmān jātir kartabya', Islām-pracāraḥ, 8th yr., 4th no.; Jyāiṣṭha, 1314 B.S. (1907)

22nd Congress in Surat (1907) deeming this failure to be the judgement of Allāh.<sup>14</sup>

In 1909 Bāsanā argued that Bengalees consisted of two groups: Hindus and Moslems; neither could progress without the other. But the establishment of true unity depended upon Hindu zemindars, who were rich enough to dine at the Great Eastern Hotel in Calcutta, allowing their poor tenants to practise their 'religious' 'korbānī' in public. "This must be brought to the attention of the leaders of the Hindu community."<sup>15</sup>

(b) Occasional tendency to see the British as a scapegoat.

Kohinur in 1907 argued that communal disharmony was spread by the British as part of their policy of 'divide and rule': British incitements to both Hindus and Moslems ought, therefore, to be regarded as the machinations of an interested party.<sup>16</sup> Much later in 1926 Satyāgrahī alleged that the Aryasamājites, who were then stirring up so much

14.9 Editor, "Jātīya o dharma sambād", Islām-pracārak, 8th yr., 8th no.; Māgh, 1314 B.S. (1908).

15. Amiruddin Ahmad, 'Musalmān śikṣā samiti', Bāsanā, 2nd yr., 1st no.; Bâiśākh, 1316 B.S. (1909).

16. Osman Ali, 'Hindu Musalmāner birodher kāraṇ o tannibāraṇer upāy', Kohinur, 7th yr., 10th and 11th nos.; Māgh and Fālugin, 1313 B.S. (1907).

dissentation between Hindus and Moslems,<sup>17</sup> were in fact British agents.<sup>18</sup>

(c) Underlying tendency of Moslem intransigence.

In 1888 an anonymous article attributed to Mir Mosharraf Hossain<sup>19</sup> published in Ahmadi argued that Moslems ought in the interests of Hindu-Moslem brotherhood to abandon cow-sacrifice which was then apparently a subject of controversy<sup>20</sup> in both

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17. Arya Samāj aimed primarily at socio-religious reforms in Hindu society. In the course of its development, however, it grew more and more militant, thus alarming Moslems. A History of the Freedom Movement states, the Arya Samāj "produced large quantities of propaganda literature. Islam and the Prophet were the special targets of vilification...such writings produced utter contempt for every Islamic tradition and institution in the minds of the Hindus and a burning indignation in the hearts of the Muslims. All the rules of good neighbourliness were thrown to the winds by the Arya Samajist leaders and propagandists. It is not possible to carry on such a crusade against the cherished beliefs of a people without creating bitterness and hostility." ~ Vol.III, pt.1, 1961, p.245. See also W.R.Smith, Nationalism and Reform in India, 1938, pp.57-58.
18. Editor, 'Eslām šatru nā deśa-bāirī', Satyāgrahī, 14th Pāṇṣ, 1333 B.S. (1926).
19. Acclaimed as 'father of Bengali Moslem literature' Mir Mosharraf Hossain (1848-1911) is a front rank Bengali writer with about 30 works to his credit covering the whole literary spectrum from autobiography to poetry. His Biśād Sindhu (1885-90) remains a best-seller. A firm believer in Hindu-Moslem harmony, he campaigned against cow-slaughter in his highly controversial Go-Jīban (1889).
20. Hindu and Moslem attitudes to the cow were diametrically opposed: for Hindus it was an object of divine reverence; for Moslems it was an object of divinely-approved (hālāl) human consumption, figuring in important ceremonial feast (known as Bakar Id). Hindu reverence for the life of the cow, as expressed in such organisation as Go rakṣiṇī sabhā (i.e. Cow protection society), founded in 1882, which spread throughout India, resulted in a deplorable lack of consideration for the way of life of the cow-consuming

(continued on next page.....)

the English and Bengali Press. The author maintained that much other meat was available for consumption in India besides beef. The cow benefited mankind in innumerable ways - its milk sustained life, its hide provided shoes and slippers and even its powdered bones purified sugar and salt. "Do you not feel the least pity when sticking a knife into the throat of that which benefits you so much?"<sup>21</sup>

Akhbāre Eslāmīyā that year rejected this plea, however, arguing that despite the consumption of beef cows were the most numerous domestic animal in India. The cow thrived and increased because Moslem cared for it not only because of beef, but on account of its many other uses also; its milk, its physical contribution to agriculture and so forth.<sup>22</sup>

In 1909 Bāsanā put forward the view that even Hindus had at one time performed cow-sacrifice: "The Mahābhārata of the great sage Vyāsa shows that cow-sacrifice was a straight path to Heaven for Hindus. The Tāittiriya Brāhmaṇa in the śukla Yajurveda provides for the sacrifice of 17 cows. According to the Mahābhārata Madra Rāj [King of Madra, a land in ancient India] slaughtered ten thousand cows to feed the Brahmins and

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(continued from previous page)

Moslems: the ensuing riots were many and bloody. See also Sufia Ahmad, Some Aspects of the History of the Muslim Community in Bengal, 1884-1912, London University unpublished Ph.D. thesis, pp.279-84.

21. 'Gokul nirmūl āśaṅkā, Ahmadī, 1st. no.; 1295 B.S. (1888).  
 22. 'Gokul nirmūl āśaṅkā prabandher pratibād', Akhbāre Eslāmīyā, 5th vol., 4th no.; Śrābaṅ, 1295 B.S. (1888).

according to Yajur veda it was permissible to perform great sacrifices with the heads of such creatures as sheep, goats, horses and men". Bāsanā then ridiculed the editor of Hindu Rañjikā:<sup>23</sup> "Oppressing two or three poor innocent Moslems for cow-sacrifice may have made them so courageous, but Moslems are not cowards... They do not hesitate even to lay down their lives for their religion. Unless he [the editor] can explain to us with evidence and logic that cow-slaughter is wrong he will never keep us from observing the dispensations of our religion with threats... India will never advance if Hindus and Moslems are incited to violence like this over cow-slaughter. Our brother editor must not think that Hindus will be able to scale the heights of prosperity without the Moslems."<sup>24</sup>

## II

1909-1920

Continued need for harmony: clearer consciousness of the grounds of communal friction.

In 1917 Al-Eslām lamented the fact that Moslems had no place in the 'national song' Bānga Āmār composed by D.L.

23. An influential Hindu organ, which ran for about 75 years, the Hindu rañjikā was first published in March, 1866 from Rajshahi.

24. Sheikh Reyajuddin Ahmad, 'Jībahatyā o korbānī', Bāsanā, 2nd vol., 2nd no.; Jyāāiṣṭha, 1316 B.S. (1909).

Roy.<sup>25</sup> "It mentions Asoka, Nimai, Rasumani, Pratapaditya<sup>26</sup> but contains no trace of Moslem heroes like Giyasuddin, Isa Khan<sup>27</sup> and so forth. The population of Bengal is seven crores - more than half of these are Moslems. Why then were Moslemsexcluded from a national song composed for this vast

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25. Dvijendra Lal Roy (1863-1913) is one of the outstanding play-wrights of Bengal. His historical plays are still popular. He is also well-known as a composer in comic-verse.
26. Asoka - the famous Maurya emperor (273-232 B.C.) in ancient India.  
 Nimai - a popular name for Sri Chaitanya (1485-1533), the founder of Vaisnavism in Bengal.  
 Rasumani - popular name for Rani Rasmani (d. 1861) of Calcutta, who founded the famous temple and guest house in Dakṣiṇéśvar.  
 Pratapaditya - was one of the famous 'twelve chieftains' (Bāra bhuiyā) of Bengal and king of Jessore in 16th century. Bharat Chandra mentions him in his Annadā-maṅgal (1752-53). His valour and struggle for independence inspired the early 20th century Hindu authors, who sought to find in him a national hero fighting against imperialist foreign rule.
27. Giyasuddin - Giyasuddin Azam Shah, an independent Sultan of Bengal in 1389-1410, is distinguished for patronising vernacular literature in the royal court of Gāuṇa. He favoured the poets, Vidyapati and Shāh Mohāmmad Sagir, and is said to have invited the Persian poet Hāfiz to Bengal. Isa Khan - Dewan Isa Khan Masnad-i-ala is regarded as the most prominent among the 'twelve chieftains' of Bengal. His courage and adventures made him a legendary figure in the ballads of Eastern Bengal. In recent times also he has been depicted in many historical plays and novels: Bengalee Moslems especially have found in him a symbol of their national pride.

Bengalee nation constituted of both Hindus and Moslems?"<sup>28</sup>

The following year Al-Eslām analysed the sources of friction between the Hindus and Moslems of India. "The grounds for complaint by Moslems against Hindus in Bengal are: firstly, Hindus unjustly and unfairly attack Moslems in literature;<sup>29</sup> secondly, they oppose cow-sacrifice;<sup>30</sup> thirdly, they stop Moslems from getting government jobs;<sup>31</sup> fourthly, ordinary Moslems complain that Hindu zemindars behave unfairly towards them,<sup>32</sup> and even ordinary Hindus make insinuations and behave in a hostile, contemptuous manner towards them on the streets, in trains and steamers and in the market place." Al-Eslām then went on to outline the kind of distortions of Moslems contained in Hindu literature and in school text books that we have referred to elsewhere.<sup>33</sup> It continued, "Hindus have no lawful right to interfere, especially since Moslems perform their cow-sacrifice in their own homes and not in public. Yet we also warn Moslems to perform their cow-sacrifice as far as possible out of sight out of consideration

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28. S.M.Akbaruddin B.A., 'Bartamān Bāṅgālā sāhitye Musalmāner sthān', Al-Eslām, 2nd yr., 10th no.; Māgh, 1323 B.S. (1917).

29. For details see chapter on Literature.

30. Supra pp. 153, 157.

31. Supra pp. 149-51.

32. Infra pp. 160-61.

33. See chapters on Literature and Education.

for their neighbours."<sup>34</sup>

Regarding positions in self-government institutions Al-Eslām alleged, "Moslems do not seem to have any right to such positions as Chairman, Vice-Chairman or member of the Local Boards, District Boards and Municipalities which are granted by the Government to people of this country as a token of self-government in addition to government posts. By fair means or foul Hindus exclude Moslems from these posts and enjoy almost all of them themselves. Yet Moslems constitute 52% of the population of this Province. In these circumstances, since Moslems are unable to compete with Hindus they ask for the right to separate electorates."<sup>35</sup> The Hindus are impeding the achievements of Moslem aims by tumultuous agitations against them....

"Moslem tenants do not receive civil treatment in the offices of Hindu zemindars."<sup>36</sup> They are forced to subscribe to the cost of Hindu pujas and music at fares, both of which

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34. Ahmad Ali, 'Hindu Musalmān praśna', Al-Eslām, 3rd yr., 11th no.; Fālgun, 1324 B.S. (1918).

35. See chapter on Politics, p. 121, fn. 140.

36. Tagore relates a relevant experience of his own: "When I first took charge of my zemindary estate I noticed that if it were necessary to seat a Moslem ryot in the office then one used to roll up the edge of the carpet and let him sit on the bare floor." - 'Hindu Musalmān', Rabindra racanābali, vol. XXIV, 1958, p. 376.

are contrary to their religious beliefs. Moslem tenants are treated worse than Hindu tenants... These Hindu zemindars even prevent them from performing cow-sacrifice. If the Moslem tax payers happen to be prepared to vote for a Moslem candidate for the Municipality or Local Board, then the Hindu zemindars compel them to vote for a Hindu candidate by harassment... There is no need to say anything about the behaviour of common Hindus. Their sweetest endearment for Moslems is 'nege' [an abusive term to mean Moslem]... When a number of Moslems board a train or steamer... Hindus say, 'Good gracious, a flock of 'neges have got on'... If we are to bind this country with ties of love and affection then it is our duty to attempt to remedy these matters..."<sup>37</sup>

Baṅga Nūr in 1920 also argued that cow-sacrifice was not the sole cause of friction. Other sources of friction were the Hindu phobia about contact with Moslems polluting them:<sup>38</sup> their use of abusive terms like 'yavana', 'Mleccha', 'pāti Nere' and so forth; their bad treatment of Moslems over jobs

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37. Ahmad Ali, op.cit.

38. Tagore mentions a few such incidents in essays like Lokahit, Bātāyaniker patra and Hindu Musalmān. In Lokahit he relates how a Hindu political worker asked his Moslem fellow-worker to step down from the verandah, so that he, the Hindu, might drink water, impolluted by Moslem contact. This Hindu attitude of regarding Moslems as untouchables did much to embitter Moslems and widen the gulf between the two communities.

and their general inclination to do Moslems down wherever  
 their own interests are involved... All these things render  
 Hindu-Moslem unity more distant".<sup>39</sup>

### III

#### A few positive signs of friendship.<sup>40</sup>

Actually we have only one press-extract to hand  
 indicating that positive signs of friendship were in fact  
 manifested. The extract is from Al-Eslām in 1919 and we  
 quote it in full:

"It is a very hopeful and joyful thing that the poverty  
 and sameness of our circumstances have undeniably aroused in  
 us Hindus and Moslems a desire for mutual harmony. Breaking  
 the narrow bounds of convention, we are becoming aware of the  
 existence of a universal humanity. Consequently, from above  
 the Jāme Mosque in Delhi and the Nākhodā Mosque in Calcutta

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39. Editor, 'Go-korbānī o Hindu Mosalmān', Bāṅga Nūr, 1st  
 yr., 9th no.; Śrābaṅ, 1327 B.S. (1920).

40. Despite communal differences at least one phase of  
 Hindu-Moslem harmony occurred round about 1916, mainly  
 for political reasons. Reaching an understanding that  
 year, Congress and the Moslem League jointly drafted  
 a Constitution in Lucknow. This was followed by a  
 number of joint annual sessions. Still more spectacular,  
 however, was the country-wide Hindu-Moslem harmony when  
 brother-like both communities plunged into Khilāfat,  
 Non-Cooperation agitations against their common foe, the  
 British. Such events were unprecedented in Indian history;  
 and never again, after the collapse of the agitations  
 in the early twenties, did the two communities come so  
 close together.

we now hear the addresses of Svami Sraddhanada and Byomkesh Chakravarti respectively; in the Hindu temple in Mādhava Bāgh in Bombay Moslems, Parsees and Hindus are meeting in fellowship; a Hindu pundit unasked and without hesitation offered the Moslems at a meeting in Patna his own turban so that they could say their prayers; on the maidan in Calcutta Hindus and Moslems were giving each other iced sherbet... Now the point is that we must each of us obviously take care that this harmony is sincere and durable."<sup>41</sup>

## IV

1923 onwards: deteriorating relations.

(a) 1923: signs of strain.

(i) In Bengal.

In an article in Choltān in 1923 Muhammad Shahidullah<sup>42</sup> expressed his belief that culture was the path to Hindu-Moslem harmony - "no genuine harmony will be achieved till Moslems

41. Abdul Malek Choudhury, 'Ālocanār ālocanā', Al-Eslām, 5th yr., 9th no.; Pāṣ, 1326 B.S. (1919).

For a detailed account of Hindu-Moslem political collaboration between 1919 and 1923 see chapter on Politics, III (a).

42. Dr. Muhammad Shahidullah (1885-1969) was acclaimed as an outstanding linguist in the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent. A life-long educationist, he taught linguistics and Bengali literature in the universities of Dacca and Rajshahi. His important works include: Bāmlā Sāhityer Kathā, 2 vols. (1953, 1964), Vidyāpati Satak (1954), Buddhist Mystic Songs (1960), Bāmlā bhāṣār ittibr̥tta (1965) and Purba Pākistānī āncalik bhāṣār abhidhān, 3 vols. (1965-68).

cease to be ignorant of Hindu culture and Hindus of Moslem culture."<sup>43</sup> Unfortunately in this article he stressed the right of each community to propagate its own religion, because this in itself was to become a source of strain. In that same issue of Choltān the editor made clear that in the interest of Svadeśī and the Khilāfat Moslems were prepared to make concessions: "Indeed they are reluctant to quarrel even about their proportionate representation in government jobs and in elected seats. But Moslems cannot remain silent under any circumstances when they see their religion insulted and Islam slighted." Later that same year Choltān complained that Congress organs like the Calcutta Servant and Ananda Bazar Patrika and nationalist organ Amrita Bazar and moderate journal Basumati were constantly beating the drum of Hindu-Moslem unity and fellowship, yet, nevertheless, never hesitating to support measures which at one stroke could "wipe out any plan of unity from the country for ever."<sup>44</sup>

(ii) Outside.

That same year the editor of Choltān drew attention to the threat to Hindu-Moslem harmony in Lahore and Amritsar,

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43. Muhammad Shahidullah, 'Daśer Kathā', Choltān, 8th yr., 2nd no.; 4th Jyāiṣṭha, 1330 B.S.; 18th May, 1923.  
 44. Editor, 'Ālocanā', Choltān, 8th yr., 16th No.; 14th Bhādra, 1330 B.S.; 31st August, 1923.

saying, "What can be more regrettable than that Hindus and Moslems through forming factions over their own petty interests should destroy the unity and harmony upon which the independence of India depends?"<sup>45</sup> In June that year Choltān's editor

also drew attention to an insult to the Prophet made by "the Keśarī, an Arya organ from Lahore... Unless the Keśarī, immediately begs forgiveness...the river of blood which flowed through Calcutta over a similar offensive comment by the editor of the Calcutta 'Daily News' will be re-enacted in the Punjab and throughout India."<sup>46</sup> Later that year

Choltān lamented the depressed state of Moslems in Kashmir where they constituted 80% of the population, yet held scarcely 5% of the State posts in the executive and judiciary - "this is extremely deplorable".<sup>47</sup>

(b) 1923: Hindu extremism outside Bengal.

In June, 1923 the editor of Choltān requested the Hindu community to compel Svami Sraddhananda and the disciples of his Suddhi movement<sup>48</sup> to desist from their unfair oppression of

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45. Editor, 'Pāñjābe Hindu Mochalmān', Choltān, 8th yr., 1st no.; 28th Bāiśākh, 1330 B.S. (1923).
46. Editor, 'Keśarīr garalodgīran', Choltān, 8th yr., 6th no.; 32nd Jyāiṣṭha, 1330 B.S.; 15th June, 1923.
47. Editor, 'Kāśmīre Mochalmān', Choltān, 8th yr., 22nd no.; 25th Aśvin, 1330 B.S. (1923).
48. The Arya Samāj movement to 'purify' (Suddhi - 'purification') and reconvert former converts from Hinduism to Islam. Its main appeal was to communal bigotry, and it thus intensified anti-Moslem sentiment. The movement gained most ground after 1923, when Hindu-Moslem harmony sharply declined, degenerating into open hostility once more.

the Rajput Mālkānā Moslems.<sup>49</sup> It said "The thought of the eventual consequences of such oppressions fills us with deep concern". Choltān then continued, "It is not that the Moslem community cannot remedy the matter, but for one thing, they desire peace and secondly, they desire Hindu-Moslem unity in the interests of Khilāfat and Svarāj."<sup>50</sup>

In August that year the editor of Choltān warned Hindu Congressite leaders and those desirous of Svarāj to stop the Hindu Saṅgathan,<sup>51</sup> initiated by Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya (1861-1946) in the Punjab and North Western provinces, which aimed "to resist Moslem powers" and "if possible, drive them from India". Unless their activities were checked "a bloody Ganges will flow in India and wash away Hindus and Moslems alike".<sup>52</sup>

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49. See chapter on Society, p. 379.

50. Editor, 'Āryaganer atyācār', Choltān, 8th yr., 5th no.; 25th Jyāāiṣṭha, 1330 B.S.; 8th June, 1923.

51. Saṅgathan was a militant Hindu communal movement started round about 1923. Its purpose was "to establish in India a strong, powerful, united and wide-awake political party which would continuously strive for achieving the ideal of a free Hindu State... The Indian Moslems today are merely an irrelevance. Their only future is gradually to be absorbed into Hinduism through Shuddhi". - as quoted in A History of the Freedom Movement, op.cit., p.259.

52. Editor, 'Hindu saṅgathaner biṣamaṃ phal', Choltān, 8th yr., 13th no.; 25th Śrābaṃ, 1330 B.S.; 10th August, 1923.

"The sacred sense of unity and fellowship that was gradually strengthening between Hindus and Moslems due to Mahatma Gandhi's determined efforts is", Choltān's editor lamented one week later, "now facing ruin because of the Saṅgathan and Suddhi movements. It does not even seem likely that any good will be achieved for the Hindu community by the Hindu Sabhā [Mahā Sabhā]. The only gains will be an intensification of anti-Moslem feeling and the ruin of the high and noble aims of Congress."<sup>53</sup>

(c) 1923-24: Outbreaks of violence.

In May, 1923 Choltān's editor reported with regret that the peace prevailing in Bengal had unfortunately been broken by a terrible riot "between [Hindu] Namaḥ Sūdra and Moslems in Faridpur over worldly matters... Alas, O unfortunate inhabitants of India! Where is your Svarāj, and why this bloody fight amongst yourselves? Congress and Khilāfat workers must try quickly to settle this dispute."<sup>54</sup>

In September that year Choltān's editor commented on eleven Moslems martyred in a riot in Shaharanpur, U.P. Yet

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53. Editor, 'Alocanā', Choltān, 8th yr., 14th no.; 32nd Srāban, 1330 B.S.; 17th August, 1923.  
 54. Editor, 'Alocanā', Choltān, 8th yr., 3rd no.; 11th Jyāiṣṭha, 1330 B.S.; 25th May, 1923.

our Hindu brethren are still not satisfied. Their fury persists even though thousands of Moplahs have been slaughtered in Malabar and the whole race is on the brink of destruction.<sup>55</sup> Yet, is peace to be achieved only by conversion to Hinduism of crores and crores of Moslems as was proposed by the Hindu Sabhā and the Suddhi?"<sup>56</sup>

Commenting on a recent riot in Delhi in 1924 Islam-darśan attributed it partly to "the insistence of Hindus on the banning of cow-sacrifice and cow-slaughter", partly "to the inhuman oppression of Moslems by staunch Hindus", and partly to Government "interference in Moslem religious practices... Disregarding the liberal proclamation that 'In the British Empire every man shall be able freely to perform his religious obligations',<sup>57</sup> the Government has in many places begun to interfere in the ordinary religious and communal rights of Moslems in order to please Hindus."<sup>58</sup>

(d) 1924: Bones of contention persist.

In 1924 the editor of Sāmyabādī raised the old question

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55. See W.R. Smith, op.cit., pp.314-17.  
 56. Editor, 'Alocanā', Choltān, 8th yr., 18th no.; 28th Bhādra, 1330 B.S.; 14th September, 1923.  
 57. Ref. Queen Victoria's proclamation on November 1, 1958.  
 58. Mohammad Nurul Haq Choudhury, 'Dillīr gājī o'śahīdgan', Islām-darśan, 4th yr., 3rd no.; Āsvin, 1331 B.S. (1924).

of 'who are the yavanas?'.<sup>59</sup> Under the misconception that this term referred to Moslems, Hindus used it in their conversation and articles "and thus give vent to their abusive inclinations". Unfortunately, however, the editor maintained, yavana referred to "a part of the caste-ridden community". He, therefore, hoped that in the interests of Hindu-Moslem fellowship this foul 'yavanism' would cease.<sup>60</sup> That it did not cease, however, is revealed in Saogāt in 1928, when the term 'yavana' was identified as definitely pejorative. According to Saogāt 'yavana' meant either some of the Greeks who entered India from the north west or "a small number of people in India at the time of the Mahābhārata." Thus it was possible that as descendants of "castes contemporaneous with the Mahābhārata", some of these people, who termed Moslems "yavana" "to create a literary reputation," might themselves be descendants of "yavanas".

"Now the question is," Saogāt continued, "how did this term come to be applied to the Moslems? Indians considered all those races who entered India by the northWest to be yavanas... Just as the Greeks called the highly-civilised

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59. Supra pp. 151-52. See also chapter on Literature, pp. 200-02.  
 60. Editor, 'Yavan Kāhārā?', Sāmyabādī, 2nd yr., 3rd no.; Bâisākh, 1331 B.S. (1924).

Egyptians and Persians barbarians, the inhabitants of India similarly designated the Mongolians, the Turks and the Arabs with the same term 'yavana'... It used not to evoke feelings of contempt: it merely meant 'foreigner'. But it is perfectly obvious that those who now use it to mean 'Moslem' feel in their hearts a very definite abhorrence.

"In Bengali literature the word 'yavana' is well-known in the sense of Moslem and carries a very clear feeling of distaste".<sup>61</sup>

In 1925 Śariyat reported on the burial of a fakir in New Market, Calcutta. The burial was witnessed by the Market and Municipal authorities. But shortly afterwards some Hindu newspapers and prominent Hindu members of the Municipality protested and conspired to get the grave removed. Commenting on this Śariyat wrote, "Despite numerous outcries and appeals by Moslems against this bias and lack of sympathy... nothing is being done... If the grave is removed... Moslems will be compelled to conclude, they are already witnessing the future bitter fruits of Svarāj i.e. Hindu Svarāj in India."<sup>62</sup>

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61. Matinuddin Ahmad, 'Yavan', Saogāt, 6th yr., 2nd no.; Bhādra, 1335 B.S. (1928).

62. Editor, 'Kabar samasyā', Śariyat, 2nd yr., 5th no.; Bhādra, 1332 B.S. (1925).

"Despite the loud, vociferous daylong proclamations about communal harmony....," Raoṣan hedāyēt asked in 1925, "how far have our Hindu brothers progressed towards unity or fellowship?". Raoṣan hedāyēt then went on to say that Hindus were still obsessed with the possibility of being polluted by Moslems. Hindu literature by Bankim Chandra, Dvijendralal Roy and Isvar Chandra Gupta<sup>63</sup> still bristled with insults to Moslems.<sup>64</sup> Hindus continued to "upset themselves about cow-sacrifice" despite the fact Moslems never interfered with their Durgā Pujā. Many Hindu money-lenders continued to exploit Moslems. Hindu zemindars continued to insult Moslem visitors to their offices. So "what is being done to remedy this", Raoṣan hedāyēt asked, "by Hindu leaders, Congress workers and our Svarājite brethren?"<sup>65</sup>

A few months later Raoṣan hedāyēt was still lamenting the lack of sufficient show of goodwill by Hindus. Disputes were still going on over communal elections, District Board, Local Board, Municipality and so forth. The controversy

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63. Isvar Chandra Gupta (1812-1859), described as the 'poet of transition-age', was one among the popular authors of his time. He is also said to be the literary preceptor of Bankim Chandra. He published a couple of journals of which Sambād prabhākar (1831) is well-known as the pioneer of the Bengali press.

64. See chapter on Literature, pp. 199-207.

65. M. Sirajul Haq Mian, 'Milan samasyā', Raoṣan hedāyēt, 2nd yr., 1st no.; Kārtik, 1332 B.S. (1925).

over the fakir's grave in Calcutta was still inconclusive. Hindus were fuming over the founding of Islamia College<sup>(1924)</sup> and had not contributed to Khilāfat Fund one fraction of what Moslems had given to the Tilak-Svarāj Fund.<sup>66</sup> In fact it seemed to Raośan hedāyet that the show of good will was all, or virtually all, on the Moslem side. "The anniversary of Gandhiji's imprisonment has been celebrated, but was that of the Ali brothers [Saokat Ali and Mohammad Ali]? A memorial has been raised to Mr. Das [C.R.Das], but is anything being done for B'āmmā [mother of Ali brothers]?" The attainment of Svarāj depended on communal harmony = "both communities equally united and strong must strive for the good of the country."<sup>67</sup>

Things seemed to have remained much the same for the next few years. Hindu remained obsessed with touchability, though Ahmadī admitted, that Moslems were also equally misguided due to the distortion of Islam "by illiterate Maolvis and Mullā's blind with self-interest." Hindu

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66. The Fund, organised in memory of B.G.Tilak (d.1920), was raised to help the freedom (Svarāj) movement in India.

67. Ismail Hossain Siraji, 'Hindu Mochalmāner ekatā', Raośan hedāyet, 2nd yr., 5th no.; Fālgun, 1332 B.S. (1926).

cultural media still bred anti-Moslem feelings. Hindus and Moslems "like hungry dogs" still fought over government jobs and still quarrelled over elections to Councils, District Boards and Municipalities. The only new feature brought to light by Ahmadī was that though ordinary illiterate people played the major role in communal riots the actual responsibility lay with the educated of both communities: "It is the educated who form the opinions of the others. Unfortunately, the more educated people in both communities do not sufficiently appreciate their responsibility in this matter."<sup>68</sup>

(e) 1924: Moslem consciousness of rights and entitlements in proportion to population.

Apparently Hindus had been enjoying a monopoly of employment in a number of large public institutions such as Calcutta University and Calcutta Corporation. Svarājite leaders on the Calcutta Corporation had in 1924 granted a score or so "temporary, low-paid jobs to Moslems".<sup>69</sup> This

68. Khan Sahib Abul Hashem Khan Choudhury, M.A., 'Hindu Musalmān birodh o tāhā nibāraṇer upāy', Ahmadī, 2nd yr., 1st no.; Bâiśākh, 1333 B.S. (1926).

69. Editor, 'Cākurī o Hindu Musalmān', Islām-darśan, 4th yr., 1st no.; Śrābaṇ, 1331 B.S. (1924). Political considerations induced the Svarāya party, then controlling Calcutta Corporation, to provide jobs for Moslems. By the Bengal Pact, accepted in December 1923, it agreed to offer Moslems certain rights in the Provincial Council and in elections to local bodies; 55% of all Government posts were to be reserved for Moslems; until that percentage was reached, Moslems were to be given priority in 80% of all recruitments. Publication of these  
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had provoked a stream of anger, grief and resentment from the Hindu Press: "'What injustice! Are we to deprive the long-term hereditary, eternal lease-holders of these posts, the Hindus, and give them to the Moslems, who are forever slighted and rejected? O Hindus, arise! your land and freedom are at stake, India faces disaster.'" "O Moslems", Islam-darśan cried, "can you not contemptuously trample on the trickery and sweet words of these crooked, treacherous, hypocritical friends and flinging aside all care for their pleasure and anger like a handful of dust, can you not stand upon your own two feet?"<sup>70</sup>

Later that same year Islām-darśan commented on the proportion of the seven crores of rupees paid in salaries to government employees that the Moslems as a community and as a proportion of the country's population ought to receive viz. about four crores, and the amount and the proportion it actually received viz. about thirty five lacs of rupees or roughly one twentieth of the total, and concluded, "almost the whole of the remaining 6 crores 65 lacs of rupees is swallowed by the Hindus... The statistics are given below...

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terms provoked stormy criticism from the Hindu Press. For appointing Moslems to offices on the Calcutta Corporation the Svarajite leaderships were bitterly campaigned against.

70. Islām-darśan, ibid.

Provincial Service	Hindu percentage	Moslem percentage
Executive	75	25
Judicial	94	6

....Besides this, it is doubtful whether or not the number of Moslem jobholders in comparison to Hindus in the District Boards, Local Boards, Municipalities and other offices will be even comparable to a drop of dew in the ocean. But as a community and as a proportion of the population Moslems are really entitled to hold 55% of the jobs in each of these departments."<sup>71</sup>

(f) 1925 onwards: Hindu extremism within Bengal.

(i) Suddhi, Saṅgathan<sup>72</sup> etc.

From an editorial in Islām-darśan in 1925 it would seem that the Hindu leaders of the Saṅgathan movement Madan Mohan Malaviya and Lala Lajpat Roy (1856-1928) were somewhat diplomatic in expounding the aims and intentions of their movements, but that their foremost disciples were far more straight-forward and outspoken. The editor referred to this diplomacy as 'chicanery'. Lala Lajpat Roy's leading associate, Lala Hardayal (an ex-revolutionary), had, however, recently and outspokenly ordered that "either Moslems should

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71. Mohammad Abdul Hakim, 'Bhārate Hindu Musalmān samasyā', Islām-darśan, 4th yr., 3rd no.; Āśvin, 1331 B.S. (1924). For earlier press reactions see pp. 49-51.

72. Supp. pp. 65-66 f.n. 48 and 51.

accept Hinduism, or quit India with their lives and honour intact."<sup>73</sup> And similarly, the Arya Samajite leader Svami Sraddhananda's foremost associate, Svami Satya Deva, had "recently stated in even more unequivocal language the aims of the Suddhi and Samgathan movements...."<sup>74</sup>

Islām-darśan's editor was alarmed that the Ārya Samāj and the Suddhi Samgathan movements were not "confined solely to Western India", the activities of the Hindu Sabhā, the Suddhi Sabhā, the Nārī Raksā Samiti [the association for the protection of women] in Bengal and the deep sympathy shown towards these movements by the Hindu Press led him to surmise that preparations were being made to launch similar vigorous campaigns even in Bengal.

This prompted the editor to become sarcastic over the Hindu Press. He wrote: "The Non-cooperation spokesman

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73. For a fuller account of Lala Hardayal's statement see The Times of India, July, 25th 1925.

74. The statement furthermore reveals Arya Samajites' attitude towards Moslems: Satya Deva proclaimed in 1925, "When we are strong, we shall put forward the following conditions before the Muslims: 'Do not look upon the Quran as a revealed book; do not recognise Muhammad as the prophet of God;...give up the observance of Muslim festivals and begin to observe Hindu festivals instead;... They [Muslims] should give up Islamic names and call themselves Ram Din, Krishna Khan etc.; they must worship in Hindi and give up praying in Arabic.'" (as quoted in A History of the Freedom Movement, op.cit., p.262.)

This excerpt would, we believe, largely account for the bitterness of Moslem public reactions to the Samaj-sponsored, Suddhi-samgathan movements.

'The Servant', the Svarāj-advocating 'Forward', the liberal 'Hindustān' and the drunken 'Bengalee', the hemp-addicted 'Nāyāk', the many-faced 'Basumatī' with its perverted tastes and intense anti-Moslem feelings and the flag-waver of equality and fraternity the 'Sañjībanī' are all unanimously and concertedly supporting the activities of the Arya Samājīs and 'the Suddhi Saṃgathan and Nārī-Rakṣā movements..."

He finally called upon all Moslem leaders both spiritual and political to think out a line of defence.<sup>75</sup>

The activities of the Arya Samājites presumably grew so alarming and disruptive of Hindu-Moslem harmony that the following year the editor of Satyāgrahī remarked: "Many people are of the opinion that the bureaucracy [i.e. the British] expressly employs the Arya Samājīs to stir up dissention between Hindus and Moslems. We have so far not found any reason for believing the contrary."<sup>76</sup>

(ii) Music in front of mosques.<sup>77</sup>

The editor of Moslem darpan in June, 1926 revealed

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75. Editor, 'Suddhi o saṃgathaner svarup', Islām-darśan, Agraḥāyan, 1332 B.S. (1925).

76. Editor, 'Islām śatru nā deś-bāirī?', Satyāgrahī, 14th Pāuṣ, 1333 B.S. (1926).

77. As with the cow, Hindu and Moslem attitudes to music and religion were diametrically opposed: Moslems demanded absolute silence for Mosque prayers; Hindu prayers and processions were accompanied by the braying of conches, the ringing of bells and the pounding of drums. In the circumstances, the scope for mutual dissatisfaction was great and times of tension were intensified by these contrary attitudes. Fanaticism and extremism such as  
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Moslem awareness of their minority status in India as a whole and pleaded that Government action was needed to stop music being played by Hindus before mosques, otherwise riots would last for ever and "the 23 crores of Hindus will" because of their economic and cultural superiority "completely wipe out the 7 crores of Moslems".<sup>78</sup>

A similar protest was raised earlier that same year by the editor of Hānāfī who urged that the Governor Lord Lytton be petitioned to stop singing and playing by Hindus in front of mosques, otherwise fires of unrest would spread throughout the whole country "until the Moslem's right according to the injunctions of Sariyat to protest and his strength to resist is extinguished."<sup>79</sup>

An article in Sikhā in 1927, however, seemed to place some of the blame on the Moslem side. It condemned Moslems for their "hatred towards the neighbouring Hindu community" arguing that Moslem "fanatics" were creating unrest over the playing of musical instruments in front of mosques unnecessarily.

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displayed by Aryasamajites were like lighted tapers applied to kegs of gun powder: explosions like the Great Calcutta Killing of 1926 were unfortunately almost predictable.

78. Editor, 'Mosalmān purba haitei satarka hao, nacet dhvaṃsa anibārya', Moslem darpaṇ, 2nd yr., 6th no.; June, 1926.  
79. Editorial, Hānāfī, 7th Jyāâiṣṭha, 1333 B.S. (1926).

Moslem emperors had not hesitated to allow temples to be set up even within their palaces.<sup>80</sup> "Can we not give up agitating ourselves over this playing of musical instruments in front of mosques? Obviously to do so will somewhat inconvenience us, but I am unwilling to acknowledge that by doing so we shall incur sin. It is the Hindus who will do the playing, not us. If they choose to ignore our polite request then in what way have we sinned?"<sup>81</sup>

In 1927 Tablīg protested over the insertion in a Hindu journal of a century-old news item about a disturbance caused by music in front of a mosque. "It even attempted to put this stale item into a new mould by giving it big headlines". It was unfair to add fuel to the present dispute with such stale news items.<sup>82</sup>

In 1928 Saogāt reported that Hindus in Bankura were "barbarously" boycotting Moslems because they had got the

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80. The liberal and accommodating attitudes of at least two Mughals, Akbar and Prince Dara Shukoh, may relevantly be cited here: Akbar's Hindu queens practised Hindu religious rites even within the palace. For details see Vincent A. Smith, The Oxford History of India, 1919, p.370, and Al-Badaoni, Muntakhabu't-Tawarikh (tr. W.H.Lowe), Vol.II, 1924, p.269.
81. Anwarul Kadir, 'Bāngālī Musalmāner sāmājik galad', Sikhā, 1st yr., Cāitra, 1333 B.S. (1927).
82. Maulvi Ali Ahmad Oli Islamabadi, 'Masjed o Hindu-manobrtti', Tablīg, 1st yr., 4th no.; Bhādra, 1334 B.S. (1927).

police to stop Hindus playing music in front of their mosques. The Moslems in Bankura were in the minority, and Saogāt's editor warned Hindus of the possible repercussions which this incident of "boycott, oppression and persecution" might have on Hindus in East Bengal:<sup>83</sup> "Once this tendency spreads the condition of Hindus in East Bengal will not be pleasant... This mentality of enforcing one's own views by sheer numerical strength... will preclude the possibility of communal harmony."<sup>84</sup>

(iii) Books insulting Islam.

In 1926 Raoṣan hedāyet drew attention to a book called Satarkikaraṇ o Hindu saṃgathaner ābaśyakatā ('The need for precaution and Hindu saṃgathan') by Svami Sadananda deeming it "an anti-Moslem book". "This vile attack" was almost certain to precipitate hostility between Hindus and Moslems, and Raoṣan hedāyet therefore sought the intervention of the Government and the Criminal Investigation Department to get the book "confiscated" and "the author severely punished."<sup>85</sup>

83. Here the editor suggestively drew attention to the numerical strength of Moslems in East Bengal.

84. Editor, 'Bākuraṅ Hindu Musalmān samvaddha', Saogāt, 6th yr., 1st no.; Srābaṇ, 1335 B.S. (1928).

85. Sheikh Mohammad Jamiruddin, 'Svāmī Sadānander śaytānī o Islāme bhīṣaṇ āghāt', Raoṣan hedāyet, 2nd yr., 6th no.; Cāitra, 1332 B.S. (1926).

In July, 1927 Moslem darpan drew attention to the outcome of what it called a "miscarriage of justice" by Justice Dalip Singh in acquitting the author of Rāṅgilā Rasul<sup>86</sup> which the editor of Moslem darpan regarded as "shocking abuse and bitter innuendoes against the Prophet." As a result of the author's acquittal some Hindu newspapers were "now openly publishing attacks on the Prophet and anti-Moslem articles", and disturbances had "meanwhile burst out throughout the whole country."<sup>87</sup>

(iv) Riots in Dacca.

In 1930 the editors of Saogāt and Māsik Mohāmmadī expressed deep regret over the communal riots which had recently taken place in Dacca. Neither editor placed the whole blame on either community. Saogāt stated, "In accordance with long-standing tradition the Hindus and

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86. Publication of the Urdu book, Rāṅgilā Rasul ('The Merry or Debauched Prophet'), containing, as it did, scurrilous attacks upon the Prophet, and composed by Mahashe Rajpal, a Lahore Aryasamajite, created violent reactions in Moslem society. Rajpal was sued and sentenced, but upon subsequently appealing to the High Court was acquitted. His acquittal shocked and enraged Moslems. The Moslem Press severely censured Mr. Justice Dalip Singh. Stormy controversy raged for over a couple of years, provoking communal riots and leading in 1929 to Rajpal's assassination.

87. Editor, 'Rāṅgilā Rasul', Moslem darpan, 3rd yr., 7th no.; July, 1927.

Moslems tried to prove their own innocence by placing all the blame on each other."<sup>88</sup> And Māsik Mohāmmadī stated that "it will be wrong to call this a riot, actually it is a very low type of hooliganism by a number of cowards calling themselves Hindus and Moslems."<sup>89</sup> Apparently, according to Saogāt, some Hindu newspapers had "described the hooliganism of the Dacca Hindus as indicative of heriosm". Saogāt condemned "this kind of mentality on the part of journalists" which did "terrible harm to the country".<sup>90</sup>

(g) Dissatisfaction with the leadership of all communities Islām-darśan in 1924 expressed dissatisfaction with all community leaders alleging that each of them was out merely for cheap publicity: "The all-destroying fires of quarrel, animosity and conflict between Hindus and Moslems that were once extinguished have recently burst into flame here and there in India....Mr. Gandhi tries to put out these flames of contention by fasting, Mr. Mohamad Ali by abandoning religious observances and Mr. Das [C.R.Das] by making pacts. Yet none of them has the ability nor the moral courage to

88. Editor, 'Dhākā o Kiśorgañja', Saogāt, 7th yr., 9th-10th no.; Bāiśākh-Jyāiṣṭha, 1337 B.S. (1930).

89. Editor, 'Dhākār dāngā', Māsik Mohāmmadī, 3rd yr., 10th no.; Śrāban, 1337 B.S. (1930).

90. Editor, 'Dhākā o Kiśorgañj', op.cit.

state where the main spring of this animosity and quarrel lies, or the means by which these disputes may be permanently silenced. They are ever busy in getting heaps of cheap praise and publicity from the Press by flattering each other. Consequently, how can the grievances of their communities find any place in their hearts?"<sup>91</sup>

## V

The Idealistic Stream

On the whole, people in this category tend to have over-simplified the problems. For example, in 1888 an article in Ahmadī by Mir Mosharrāf Hossain attempted to foster goodwill between Hindus and Moslems by persuading Moslems to give up eating beef since many other varieties of meat were available. According to him, though differing in religion, in heart and deed Hindus and Moslems were one and in practical affairs virtually brothers. "At times of trouble, happiness and distress, and in good times we cannot do without each other...What is the point of hurting the feelings of those who are such constant companions to us, and with whom we have such an intimate relationship?"<sup>92</sup>

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91. Al Haq, 'Dillīr milan sabhāy' amilaner bīj bapan', Islām-darśan, 4th yr., 4th no.; Kārtik, 1331 B.S. (1924).  
 92. 'Gokul nirmmūl āśankā, Ahmadī, 1st no.; 1295 B.S. (1888).

Ten years later in an article in Kohinur Mir Mosharraḥ Hossain belittled communal friction regarding it as no more than the occasional quarrels that erupted in families, neighbourhoods, between women and in sectarian groups such as the Hari Sabhā and the Brāhma Sabhā - "the quarrel boils down to this. The side of the leaf the Hindus consider clean is disliked by us. And if we go near a Hindu's bed at that very moment the water in his hookāh [hubble-bubble] is spoiled". Admittedly there was friction between Hindu and Moslem government job-holders, but regarding complaints about Hindu favouritism, Mir Mosharraḥ Hossain says, "Every one favours people from his own community".<sup>93</sup>

A similar note is struck in an article in Al-Ealām in 1916 which maintained that the sole difference between Hindus and Moslems was religion, otherwise they were fellow-countrymen and ought as brothers to collaborate: "it is inevitable that we are bound to be united whether it takes one day or two or even a century; the only surprising thing is that we are not".<sup>94</sup>

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93. Mir Mosharraḥ Hossain, 'Sat prasāṅga', Kohinur, 1st yr., 3rd no.; Bhādra, 1305 B.S. (1898).  
 94. S.M. Akbaruddin, B.A., 'Bartamān Bāṅgālā sāhitye Musalmāner sthān', Al-Eslām, 2nd yr., 8th no.; Agrahāyaṇ, 1323 B.S. (1916).

Once again in 1920, the fact that harmony between Hindus and Moslems was impeded solely by religion, was reiterated by Bāṅga Nūr: "To remove this impediment either both communities must remain completely impartial and detached in regard to each other's religious observances, or they must each be liberal enough to abandon observances and practices which are objectionable to the other."<sup>95</sup>

1926 brought from Kazi Nazrul Islam an eloquent denunciation of fanaticism in both the Hindu and Moslem camps. The narrow-minded on both sides were, in Nazrul's view, fighting over mere meaningless symbols:

"Hinduness and Moslemness are both tolerable, but emphasis put on their 'tuft' and 'beard' is intolerable; because it is those two things alone which cause fights. All that 'tuft' is not Hinduism, though it may be 'Paṇḍitism'; similarly all that 'beard' is not Islamism, but Mullaism. All this hair-splitting business now-a-days concerns only these two bunches of hair marked 'ism'. The fights that have broken out now are fights between Paṇḍits and Mulla's, not between Hindus and Moslems. The club of Nārāyaṇa will never clash with the sword of Allāh. For the Gods are one

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95. Mohammad Abdul Hakim, 'Hindu Mosalmāner milaner antarāy', Bāṅga Nūr, 1st yr., 3rd no.; Māgh, 1326 (1920).

and the same, and the weapon in one of His hands will not strike the other...

"None of the incarnations or prophets have said, I have come for the Hindus, or for the Moslems, or for the Christians. They said, we have come for mankind like light for everyone. But the devotees of Kṛṣṇa said, Kṛṣṇa belonged to the Hindus; the devotees of Mohāmmad said, Mohāmmad belonged to the Moslems; the disciples of Christ said, Christ belonged to the Christians. Christ, Mohāmmad and Kṛṣṇa have all become communal property. And all this trouble concerns that property alone...

"Man has now degenerated into an animal and has forgotten his age-long kinship. Animals' tails have sprouted on the heads of some and on the whole faces of others... They are striking the lungi [a sort of long skirt generally worn by Bengalee Moslems], the newagoṭi [loin cloth worn by Hindu ascetics], the tuft and the beard. Will these fools never stop fighting over external symbols?"<sup>96</sup>

A similar note is struck in Sikhā in 1927 accusing some Moslems of fanaticism over music in front of mosques when a polite protest would suffice.<sup>97</sup> And earlier, in 1926

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96. Kazi Nazrul Islam, 'Hindu Musalmān', Gana banī, 2nd September, 1926.

97. Anwarul Kadir, 'Bāṅgālī Musalmāner sāmājīk galad', Sikhā, 1st yr., Cāitra, 1333 B.S. (1927).

Nazrul Islam in Gana bānī came out <sup>strongly</sup> against fanaticism, arguing that once wounded all men were the same and neither the mosque nor the temple was moved by their cries of anguish. According to him, "Strike the wretched yavanas' 'Strike the wretched kāfers' - once more trouble has broken out between Hindus and Moslems. They fought with words at first, and then with blows. I saw that when those who had been shouting frenziedly for the prestige of Allāh and Mother Kālī to be protected began to fall beneath blows, they ceased uttering the name of Allāh Miṣā or Kālī Ṭhākuraṇī. Hindus and Moslems lay side by side groaning in the same words 'O father, O mother' as two children of different religions left by their mothers wail in the same voice to call their mothers. I saw that the mosque was not moved by the wailing of the dead and wounded, and the stone images in the temples made no response; only their altars remained eternally stained with the blood of foolish men. Who, O hero, will wipe out this stigma written in blood on the brows of the mosques and temples?"<sup>98</sup>

In 1930 a B.A.B.T., in Moyājjin put forward a view similar to Nazrul Islam's in Gana bānī about the fundamental

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98. Kazi Nazrul Islam, 'Maṇḍir o Masjid', Gana bānī, 26th August, 1926.

sameness of Hinduism and Islam claiming that Śrikrṣṇa in the Mahābhārata might well have been a prophet as also might the Buddha and Rāmacandra: "All of them preached the Islamic religion and whatever their followers may call themselves they are actually Moslems.... If Indian Moslems could take their Hindu brothers to their hearts acknowledging them to be believers in the same religion and if Hindus could forget their pettiness and believing the religions of both communities to be basically the same could embrace the Moslems then a new age would truly dawn in India."<sup>99</sup>

Few months earlier another graduate in Saogāt had put forward an idealistic plea for the development of Hindu-Moslem unity by as far as possible eradicating Hindu-Moslem distinctions: separate educational institutions ought to be abolished; Moslems ought to cease dreaming of Arabia, Persia, Turkey and Afghanistan and acknowledge themselves to be sons of Bengal's soil. "They must forget these two words, Hindu and Moslem. They must feel the same pride in Hindu achievements that Hindus feel, because these achievements have distinguished their mother land,.... On the other hand, Hindus have an equal right with Moslems to feel proud of Indian Moslem achievements, since those achievements have

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99. Mohammad Abdur Rashid B.A.B.T., 'Bhāratbarṣe ki paṅgambar prerita han nāi?', Moyājjin, 2nd yr., 2nd no. and 4th no.; Pāuṣ and Māgh, 1336 B.S. (1930).

enriched India. All must...melt down in a fire of love and knowledge this sense of discrimination between Hindus and Moslems, and forge from it a unified feeling,....otherwise this aggressive mentality which besets us both will drive us on through clash after clash creating an intolerable atmosphere."<sup>100</sup>

Even after the riots in Dacca in 1930 the editor of Māsik Mohāmmadī was able to keep a level head and condemned the hooliganism underlying the disturbances: "If this is the way to preserve the prestige of one community then it is about time we performed the Śrāddha and Cehlām [the last rites] of such prestige...Dacca Moslems have set fire to Hindu homes, Dacca Hindus have burnt down Moslem dwellings.... People are still working out how many Hindu and Moslem casualties there were. But most unfortunately few people think it necessary to consider how many citizens of Dacca died at the hands of citizens of Dacca, how many Bengalees were murdered by Bengalees, and how many of their own fellow-countrymen they have slaughtered...?"<sup>101</sup>

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100. Abul Hussain, M.A.B.L., 'Taruner sādhanā', Saogāt, 6th yr., 12th no.; Aṣārḥ, 1336 B.S. (1929).

101. Editor, 'Dhākār dāngā', Māsik Mohāmmadī, 3rd yr., 10th no.; Śrābaṇ, 1337 B.S. (1930).

## Chapter IV

Literature

One of the bones of contention preventing harmonious Hindu-Moslem relations was literature. Bengali literature has never catered to the whole Bengalee nation. From the outset it has been communal and sectarian, each community or sect having a literature exclusively of its own. Folk literature alone was common property. Nevertheless, this communal, sectarian nature of Bengali literature was until the 19th century no problem. It was probably only during the later half of the 19th century that a problem arose, principally because of educational institutions and the theatre.

The first half of the 19th century in Bengal witnessed the germination of a Hindu renaissance, whose literary flowering and fruition occurred in the second half of the century, when Bengalee Moslems were beginning for the first time in any numbers to enter the westernized schools and colleges, whose curricula were dominated by Hindu teachers, administrators and text book authors. The exposure of Moslems

to these heavily-Hinduised texts had one of two results: some Moslems became Hinduised; others reacted strongly and sought to retaliate. Undoubtedly, there was much to retaliate against. In most Hindu texts, fiction and dramas of the period historical Moslem personages, even Begums and princesses, were maligned and vilified. Offensive epithets like Yavana and Mleccha were applied to them. All their faults, possible and impossible, were magnified; and their virtues totally ignored. It was all part of the build-up of Hindu national prestige. The effect on Moslems, however, was deplorable, no matter which way they reacted. To acquiesce was, of course, ignoble: to retaliate was in the particular political circumstances explosive. A placatory middle path was for all but the bravest of spirits like Mir Mosharraf Hossain and Kazi Nazrul Islam virtually impossible.

In the following pages we have attempted to systematise press comments on literature and the arts in general during our period. We start with the religious impediment: the puritanical Moslem attitude to the Arts.

## I

General: The Puritanical attitude towards the Arts.(a) Painting.

There seems to have been a puritanical attitude towards the Arts in general in strictly orthodox Moslem society. Painting, Fiction and Drama were regarded by these people as reprehensible or indeed even forbidden.<sup>1</sup>

In 1920 for example, the periodical Nur was censured for having a picture of horseman on its front page.

This was described by Bāṅga Nur as "an offence to Islam".<sup>2</sup>

That same year Al-Eslām proclaimed: "The painting of human and other sentient beings is forbidden by the Islamic religion". It then went on to censure monthly periodicals for carrying "pictures of beautiful women to attract readers" and also young writers who seemed to "approve of such pictures on the plea of art... The painting of pictures.... is a prominent part of Hinduism... Consequently, to imitate Hindu taste is for a religious Moslem impossible".<sup>3</sup>

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1. Islam condemned idolatry. Throughout its history it, therefore, prohibited the representation of sentient beings. It is only very recently that Bengalee Moslems have started to contravene this prohibition.
  2. Al Faruk, 'Anubikṣan', Bāṅga Nur, 1st yr., 6th no.; Bāiśākh, 1327 B.S. (1920).
  3. Farrokh Ahmad Nejampuri, 'Sāhityer gati', Al-Eslām, 6th yr., 4th no.; Śrābaṅ, 1327 (1920). This condemnation by Al-Eslām, an contemporary influential journal, clearly shows that Bengalee Moslem society did not then approve of portraiture.

(b) Music.

"Music", Islām-darśan proclaimed in 1921, "is strictly forbidden by the Islamic scriptures. The Qorān and Hādith [accounts of the traditions of the sayings and practice of Prophet Muhammad] describe it as the 'sound of Satan' and an 'instrument of immorality'...because it...arouses...quiescent lusts and desires... Consequently, in this licentious age...every God-fearing Moslem should preserve the Moslem nation from...dancing, singing and playing the musical instruments".<sup>4</sup>

Apparently some followers of 'Mārfat'<sup>5</sup> had tried to legitimise musical instruments. But Islām Nūr in 1926 condemned this attempt alleging that its authors had "attributed astonishing lies to God, the Prophet, the Sāhābā [companions of the Prophet] and to God-fearing scholars." In Islām Nūr's opinion, "the playing of musical instruments" had not taken place "in the time of the Prophet".<sup>6</sup>

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4. Editor, 'Islām o strī svādhīnatār ādarśa', Islām-darśan, 2nd yr., 6th no.; Āsvin, 1328 B.S. (1921).  
It is to be noted that this puritanical attitude of discouraging dancing and singing, until recently, held sway over Bengalee Moslem society.
  5. A Moselm Faqir sect, whose rites are accompanied by both vocal and instrumental music.
  6. Maolana Mohammad Ruhul Amin, 'Gītabādyā Hārām haibār pramān', Islām Nūr, 1st yr., 2nd no.; Fālgun, 1332 B.S. (1926).

On the other hand, however, Māsik Mohāmmadī in 1928 maintained that there was not a single verse (Āyet) in the Qorān condemning music, nor indeed was there a single authentic Hādith indicating that the Prophet had declared music forbidden or illegitimate. On the contrary, Māsik Mohāmmadī contended, it could be incontrovertibly proved that the Prophet himself had listened to music, and not only permitted it but ordered it. Furthermore, many of his disciples had practised it. And Imāms [religious leaders] such as Abu Hanifah (699-767), Malik ibn Anas (713-795), Al-Shafi'i (767-819), Ahmad ibn Hanbal (780-855) and so forth had themselves conceded music legitimate and had listened to it. Indeed, the Imām Malik had actually been an expert of musicology.<sup>7</sup>

Sariyate Eslām, however, categorically rejected the arguments put forward by Māsik Mohāmmadī and stated that "The Qorān and Hādith contain ample evidence of singing and playing musical instruments being forbidden (hārām)".<sup>8</sup>

The following year, however, Saogāt related an interesting

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7. Mohammad Akram Khan, 'Samasyā o samādhān', Māsik Mohāmmadī, 1st yr., 12th no.; Āsvin, 1335 B.S. (1928).
  8. Maolana Afsaruddin Ahmad, 'Sangīt samasyā', Sariyate Eslām, 3rd yr., 12th no.; Pāuṣ, 1335 B.S. (1928).

story illustrating the Prophet's interest in music:

"It cannot be said that our Prophet never liked singing. The girls of Hajrat Omar's [the second great Caliph of Islam] family were reciting poetry and singing at the top of their voices one Id day. Returning home Hajrat Omar scolded them; but the Prophet Mohammad said: "Do not stop them today, Umar. Today is the day of greatest rejoicings, the Id.'" Furthermore, as Saogāt indicated, it was the Moslems who had taken the lead in classical Indian music,<sup>9</sup> and they continued to do so.<sup>10</sup>

(c) Fiction.

Music had been described as harmful as drugs,<sup>11</sup> and in 1920 Al-Eslām condemned novels also for being as addictive, destructive and wasteful of national energies as drugs, blaming them for the "disinclination...in our society towards... agriculture, commerce, science, philosophy, history and religion" and also for inclining the young towards "bad thoughts and evil desires" by inflaming them with "enticing

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9. For further accounts of Moslem patronage of music in India see M. Mujeeb, The Indian Muslims, 1967, pp. 350-51, 518-19.
10. M. Rahimunnisa Khanam 'Sangit carcā', Saogāt, 7th yr., 1st no.; Bhādra, 1336 B.S. (1929).
11. "Dogmatic Mullas say that singing has an intoxicating power...." - ibid.

descriptions...(of) the joys of union, the tender têtes-a-têtes of lovers" and other titillating allusions to "physical beauty".<sup>12</sup>

That same year Al-Eslām accused novels of making people irresponsible, lazy and work-shy, and undermining their aspirations towards nation-building. The whole country was "in danger of being flooded by novels". Everyone, even women, were eager to read them. Authors were "prospering and spawning them with redoubled enthusiasm" and publishers were "making a fat profit". The "poison from novels" was rendering Bengalee Moslems "absolutely weak and exhausted."<sup>13</sup>

Choltān in 1923 described novel-reading as "one of the contagious diseases....it is as difficult to get people to give up this craze as it is to give up betel or cigarettes... By reading non-Moslem novels, which insult our religion and society and lower our national prestige, Moslem readers are becoming....unpatriotic and apathetic...accustomed to think that, to be a Moslem is a sign of inferiority...."<sup>14</sup>

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12. Nazir Ahmad, 'Upanyās', Al-Eslām, 6th yr., 2nd no.; Jyāiṣṭha, 1327 B.S. (1920).
13. Mohamād Reyajuddin Ahmad, 'Baṅgīya Mochalmān samāje upanyāser banyā', Al-Eslām, 6th yr., 6th no.; Āsvin, 1327 B.S. (1920).
14. Editor, 'Sāhitya svarup', Choltān, 8th yr., 9th no.; 21st Āṣāḥ, 1330 B.S., 6th July, 1923.

(d) Drama.

"Even though it is forbidden by our religion", Saogāt declared in 1919, "many of our Moslem brothers now-a-days feel no compunction about dressing up like typical Hindu Bābus and sitting in the theatre bare-headed".<sup>15</sup> In 1920 a contributor to Al-Eslām attacked the theatre as sexually-titillating and morally-subversive: "The intention of most of the audience is to see the radiant beauty of the prostitutes [i.e. actresses] and enjoy their singing and dancing. I do not suppose even one per cent. go [to the theatre] for the moral". Apparently theatrical performances were so attractive that Al-Eslām's contributor suspected young men of "stealing from their parents' boxes" in order to attend and by "becoming addicted to prostitutes, catching alarming diseases and auctioning their paternal homes and home-steads."<sup>16</sup>

## II

Communalism in Bengali literature.(a) On the Hindu side.<sup>17</sup>

- (i) The allegation that some Hindu authors disparage Moslem characters and exalt Hindus; and also that they disparage Moslem institutions.

15. Editor, 'Baṅgīya nāṭyakathā', Saogāt, 1st yr., 7th no.; Jyāiṣṭha, 1326 B.S. (1919).

16. Nazir Ahmad, 'Upanyās', Al-Eslām, 6th yr., 2nd no.; Jyāiṣṭha, 1327 B.S. (1920).

17. Hindu authors had since the mid-19th century been  
(continued on next page....)

Islam-pracārak in 1903 reported that at a session of the Moslem Education Society in 1898 Syed Nabab Ali Choudhury had got a resolution passed condemning "the animosity towards Moslems....found in Bengali literature". This resolution had later been published in English under the title 'Vernacular Education in Bengal'. Though submitted for review to many Hindu editors it had received serious

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(.....continued from previous page)

awakening a spirit of nationalism in Bengal. Their vision was, however, largely limited to their own community. Thus to them 'national' renaissance and Hindu revival were virtually synonymous. Their invigoration of their co-religionists antagonised almost to the point of alienation their Moslem neighbours, whom they regularly depicted as enemies and villains. (See p.203 f.n.28) "Patriotic [Hindu] writers invariably glorified not merely the ancient Indian culture with its predominantly Hindu structure, they also began to dwell upon the struggles of the Rajputs, the Marathas, the Sikhs as instances of the freedom urge. As it happened, all these people had as their adversaries - the Muslims,..." (Amit Sen, Notes on the Bengal Renaissance, 1957, p.50). Consequently, a fierce anti-Moslem tone is detectable in the poems of Rangalal Bandyopadhyay (1827-87), H Hemchandra Bandyopadhyay (1838-1903), Dinabandhu Mitra (1830-73), Nabin Chandra Sen (1847-1909) and others. The same applies to the novels of Bhudeb Mukhopadhyay (1827-98), Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay and Ramesh Chandra Datta (1848-1909). Hindu playwrights like Kshirod prasad Vidyavinod (1863-1927) and D. L. Roy may be cited as further examples of literary attacks on Moslem sensibilities.

attention from none: indeed, Bhāratī<sup>18</sup> had merely mocked and ridiculed it.<sup>19</sup>

The kind of anti-Moslem sentiment to be found in Bengali literature was outlined in the same article of Islām-pracāra:

"Everyone, beginning from the poet Isvar Gupta, Rangalal Bandyopadhyay, novelist Bankim Chandra, the poet Hem [Hem Chandra Bandyopadhyay], and Nabin Chandra right down to the disciples of their disciples, which means any Hindu Tom, Dick and Harry, does not hesitate diabolically to abuse the Moslem race and to vilify their glorious ancestors. They take immense pleasure in exhuming from their peaceful marble tombs the Moslem Bādshās [emperors] of Delhi and depicting them in the pages of their novels and poems as wicked, tyrannical, dissolute devils and hateful lecherous dogs, and these distortions are, when staged in Calcutta and various places in the provinces, earning the praise of countless Hindus....

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18. A literary monthly edited initially by Dvijendranath Tagore and subsequently by Rabindranath Tagore, Svarnakumari Devi, Hiranmayi Devi, Sarala Devi and Manilal Ganguli. First published in 1877 from Calcutta; it continued till after 1925.
19. Ismail Hossain Siraji, 'Musalmān o Hindu lekhak', Islām-pracāra, 5th yr., 11th-12th no.; Agrahāyan-Pâuṣ, 1310 B.S. (1903).  
This refers to an article by Rabindranath in the Kārtik issue of Bhāratī in 1307 B.S. (1900).

"They have dragged out from their solitary rooms in the hārem even the daughters of the Badshas, who had been kept in strict puṛdāh, and by the help of their hemp-addicted imaginations they have depicted some of them as desirous of the love of Shivaji,<sup>20</sup> that devil in human form, that mountain-rat and slayer of women, and some of them as languishing for the love of pig-eating Rajputs<sup>21</sup> and some as the hand-maids of the Hindu slaves; and they get great pleasure from staging the stories in the theatre... It seems as if Hindu authors, orators, poets and novelists have been born only to slay the 'yavanas'<sup>22</sup> [i.e. the Moslems]. The first word a Hindu author has to write, when taking up his pen, is 'yavana', otherwise his pen simply does not move. Consequently, no matter how much you Moslems may object, the Hindus will be unable to abandon the word 'yavana'...

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20. The Maratha general, who fought the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb and eventually founded a Hindu empire in the Deccan. About two hundred years later Shivaji was rediscovered by Hindu enthusiasts and installed as an ideal Hindu hero. This to a large extent inspired the advent of Hindu revivalism in modern India. Similarly, and for the same reason Moslems found in him an incarnation of their national enemy. The heroic portrayal in novels and dramas by Hindus of Shivaji as in love with a Moslem heroine and at war with Moslem powers provoked bitter criticism from the Moslem press.
21. The reference here is to Bankim Chandra's novel Rājsiṃha (1882).
22. 'Yavana' strictly means 'alien' or 'non-Hindu'. In the 19th and 20th centuries, however, it acquired a derogatory connotation, signifying 'Moslem'..Bengalee Moslems strongly resented this. See also chapter on Hindu-Moslem Relations, pp. 51-52, 169-70.

"Open your eyes and you will see that each Hindu author is either a second Bankim or a second Nabin Chandra, both of whom were enemies of the Moslems. Each one of them are enemies of the 'yavana'. We had thought that in time this evil nature of their's would right itself... But alas, all our hopes have been in vain."<sup>23</sup>

An earlier article in Islām-pracārak in 1903 to some extent corroborated these allegations, specially the point about Moslem girls falling in love with Hindus: "Ayeśā in 'Durgeśnandinī' [1865], Rośinārā in 'Rośenārā' [1901] and Julekhā in 'Mādhabikaṅkaṅ' [1877] were all three languishing for the love of Hindus and unfortunate... those who have polluted the hearts of the lovely women... may be commended as ideal authors but they can never earn the gratitude of their readers."<sup>24</sup>

Commenting on the performance of 'Pratāpāditya'<sup>25</sup> at the Grand Theatre, Nabanūr in 1905 stated that "we were unfortunately unable to watch... with complete sympathy. The aspects of Moslems... it depicts... are not founded upon... any very

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23. Ismail Hossain Siraji, op.cit.

24. Sri Tapah, 'Hindu sāhitya', Islām-pracārak, 5th yr., 9th-10th no.; Āsvīn-Kārtik, 1310 B.S. (1903).

25. Bāṅger Pratāpāditya (1903) by Kshirod prasād Vidyavinod.

high ideals." It then deplored "the disagreeable spectacle of old Torap falling head-over-heels in love with a Hindu young lady, named Fuljani" and elsewhere the "mauling" of a young Brahmin wife by the foot soldiers of Sherkhan. Naba Nūr contemptuously supposed these scenes and the maligning of Moslems with "such sweet sounding epithets as 'yavana' and 'mleccha',<sup>26</sup> were necessary "to warm the ice-cold blood of the Hindus... The purpose behind the portrayal of the low character of Moslems...is to denigrate the Moslems... The aim of these authors is to exalt Hindu ideals at the expense of Moslems."<sup>27</sup>

That same year Naba Nūr alleged that Bankim Chandra distorted historical Moslem personages in Durgesh nandinī making Katlu Khan cruel and lecherous whereas "history is completely silent about this...History fames Osman as the son of Katlu Khan. Did Bankim babu do right in changing that relationship? By mentioning in a foot note the historical relationship between Katlu Khan and Osman he has done nothing but fire arrows of derision at Moslem society",

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26. Like yavana, mleccha signifies 'alien' or 'non-Hindu'. It too acquired the derogatory connotation of 'Moslem', and, though resented by Moslems, was much used to malign Moslem characters by Rangalal, Hemchandra, Bankimchandra and others.

27. Maolvi Imdadul Haq, B.A., 'Gryāṇḍ thifeṭāre Pratāpāditya', Naba Nūr, 3rd yr., 6th no.; Āśvin, 1312 B.S. (1905).

i.e. the distortions were not accidental or due to ignorance but, Naba Nūr implied, deliberate.<sup>28</sup>

In 1915 Al-Eslām complained the Moslem women, Ayeśā, Dalanī Begam, Rośenārā, Jāhānārā and finally Jebunnisā, "kindly accommodated" by "the literary king of Bengal, Bankim Babu" had each "assumed so fantastic a form that they are absolutely unrecognisable".<sup>29</sup>

In 1916 Al-Eslām drew attention to the "loathsome despicable" portrait of Aurangzeb in Dvijendra Lal Roy's

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28. Mohammad Habibar Rahman, 'Osmān o Jagatsiṃha', Naba Nūr, 3rd yr., 2nd no.; Jyāiṣṭha, 1312 B.S. (1905). The vigorous anti-Bankim campaign which characterises the Moslem press of this period stemmed directly from Bankim's "deliberate" maligning of Moslems. Professor T.W.Clark writes: "...usually they [Moslem characters] are cast in the roles of tyrant and oppressor. They are the abductors of women, and the rapacious collectors of taxes. Their cruelty is often for cruelty's sake.... in the later [novels], they are regularly depicted as poltroons, and the references made to them are frequently sneers of contempt... The victories won by the Hindus in different novels are won against Muslim forces... The Muslims are par excellence the foe. They are tricked in several places by superior Hindu intelligence, and routed in others by the heroism of Hindu soldiers, inspired by their divine supporters, Hari and Caṇḍī (Kālī). They are often presented as sub-humans, fit only for slaughter". ('The role of Bankim Chandra in the development of nationalism', Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon, [ed. C.H.Philips], 1961, pp.439-40.). This clearly demonstrates why Bengalee Moslems found Bankim's Durgeśnandinī, Sitārām, Anandamaṭh and Rājsiṃha so offensive.

29. Abdul Malek Choudhury, 'Baṅga sāhitye Musalmān ramaṇīr sthān', Al-Eslām, 1st yr., 1st no.; Bāiśākh, 1322 B.S. (1915).

plays Durgādās (1906) and Sājāhān (1909). The only respect in which his play Nurjāhān (1908) was more palatable than Pratāp Siṃha (1905) was in its containing less "racial hatred... He [Dvijendra Lal] has throughout attempted to demonstrate the superiority of the Hindus. This attitude is discernible in Sājāhān and Mebār patan [1908) and is precisely what people call prejudice."<sup>30</sup>

Six months earlier Al-Eslām had complained that "Hindu literature" had "so diminished the...self-respect...of even our educated young men and...inculcated in them such a sense of Moslem inferiority that their pulses" were "unmoved even by....dramas showing the imaginary, yet abominable and hateful, character of Moslem heroes"; it then asked why Moslems could not get "these vile novels and plays" either burnt or banned by the British Government.<sup>31</sup>

In 1917 Al-Eslām questioned Bankim Chandra's patriotism. "Love for the Bengalees", Al-Eslām argued must mean "love for all the inhabitants whether they be Hindu, Moslem or members of other communities.... If he had been a real patriot

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30. S.M.Akbaruddin B.A., 'Bartamān Bāngālā sāhitye Musalmāner sthān, Al-Eslām, 2nd yr., 9th no.; Pāuṣ, 1323 B.S. (1916).

31. Ismail Hossain Siraji, 'Sāhitya o jātiya jīban', Al-Eslām, 2nd yr., 3rd no.; Aṣārh, 1323 B.S. (1916).

he would have depicted the glorious character of Mir Kasim [Candraśekhar]... But instead....like a traitor he depicted it in a most heartlessly distorted way... It has not crossed his mind even once that Moslems are also Bengalees, Moslems also dwell in this country and Moslems are also brothers and neighbours to the Hindus. If he had glanced at the census report then his biased love of the Bengalees would have been cured."<sup>32</sup> (Italics mine)

Despite attacking Bankim Chandra for his anti-Moslem bias, Moslems were, nevertheless, aware of the excellence of Bankim's style which was, according to Baṅgīya-Musalmān Sāhitya-Patrikā in 1918, "simple, straightforward and lucid". It should be "our ideal, for no one needs take pains to understand it".<sup>33</sup>

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32. Abul Kalam Mohammad Shamsuddin, 'Sāhityagurur Bāṅgālī prīti', Al-Eslām, 3rd yr., 2nd no.; Jyāaiṣṭha, 1324 B.S. (1917).

Professor Clark writes: "so far as I have been able to check, in his essays and novels, he [Bankim Chandra] constantly treats the term 'Hindu' and 'Indian' as synonymous, and uses either in any context without discrimination. I have found no context in which 'Indian' can be interpreted to include 'Muslim'.... Muslims are not Indians, they are aliens. Whenever Bankim described warfare, the contestants were Hindu Indians and alien Muslims. There are no grounds for supposing this attitude to be other than the result of a deliberate choice." - op.cit., p.439.

33. Syed Emdad Ali, 'Baṅga bhāṣā o Musalmān', 'Baṅgīya-Musalmān-Sāhitya-Patrikā, 1st yr., 2nd no.; Śrābaṇ, 1325 B.S. (1918).

That same year Al-Eslām again attacked Bankim alleging that "it was through this hatred of the Moslems that he sought to enrich his patriotism and for this reason his patriotism never came off...since he has conceived Bengalee Moslems to be his enemies, the Bengalee Moslems consider him a self-interested traitor."<sup>34</sup>

In 1919 Saogāt returned to the theme of the maligning of historical Moslem personages in plays and the harm this caused to Moslem young men: "they lose faith in their own nation and through seeing their own degradation assume they have nothing to be proud of."<sup>35</sup>

Islām-darśan in 1921 alleged that through Bankim's influence foreign fashions (blouses and chemises) were being adopted by Bengalee women and also that Bankim's "communalism" had alienated the "love, sympathy and respect of a large community";<sup>36</sup> i.e. the Bengalee Moslems.

In 1923 Bāṅgīya-Musalmān-Sāhitya-Patrikā complained that Bankim Chandra enhanced Hindu characters and made

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34. Abul Kalam Shamsuddin, 'Sāhitya gurur. Bāṅgālī prīti', Al-Eslām, 4th yr., 8th no.; Agrahāyaṇ, 1325 B.S. (1918).  
 35. Editor, 'Bāṅgīya nātyakathā', Saogāt, 1st yr., 7th no.; Jyāiṣṭha, 1326 B.S. (1919).  
 36. Mohammad Abdul Hakim, 'Bāṅga sāhitya Musalmān', Islām-darśan, 1st yr., 11th no.; Fālgun, 1327 B.S. (1921).

Moslems "so unpleasant...no Moslem would wish to acknowledge them." He also imagined that Moslem girls went "crazy" over Hindu boys, who, being as controlled as Śiva, rejected them.<sup>37</sup>

In 1927 Māsik Mohāmmadī regretted that "the greatest novelist in modern Bengali, Sarat Chandra Chatterji [1876-1938] should have expressed erroneous opinions about Islamic education...being desirous to know about the place of women in Islamic society".<sup>38</sup> It was unfair, Māsik Mohāmmadī argued, "to attack Islamic ethics basing his opinions upon the conclusions of Pādri Sell,<sup>39</sup> the arch enemy of Islam."<sup>40</sup>

(ii) Anti-Moslem political attitudes attributed to Rabindranath (1861-1941).

In 1923 Choltān reported on a recent manifestation of "a very great alarming disease" called "dread of the Moslems".

37. Safiya Khatun, B.A., 'Bāṅlā sāhitye anudāratā', Bāṅlīya-Musalmān-Sāhitya-Patrikā, 5th yr., 4th no.; Māgh, 1329 B.S. (1923).

38. This refers to Saratchandra's remarks on Moslem womanhood in his book, Nārīr Mūlya (1923), which Māsik Mohāmmadī appears to have failed to understand. In fact, Saratchandra deemed the status of women to have been enhanced by Islam, and criticised European writers for disseminating false information in this respect.

39. Rev. Edward Sell B.D.M.R.A.S., one time fellow of Madras University, on behalf of the Christian Literary Society for India, published pamphlets on Islam.

40. Editor, 'Sarat bābur abhimat', Māsik Mohāmmadī, 1st yr., 1st no.; Kārtik, 1334 B.S. (1927).

Choltān could readily see how this disease might affect Bipin Chandra Pal (1858-1932), Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Lala Lajpat Roy and Svami Sraddhananda,<sup>41</sup> but was distressed to see even "the world famous, Nobel prize winner, the great poet and philosopher, Rabindranath Tagore" had also fallen a victim to the disease. Tagore was alleged to fear that in the event of "India becoming self-governing, Moslem rule would be established... It had, he said, been a fatal mistake for the Hindus to join the Khilāfat movement... Mahatma Gandhi... was... being manipulated like a puppet by the Moslems... The interests of the Hindus were in no way linked with Turkey and the Caliphate". In conclusion Choltān commented, "We admit Rabindranath is a poet, a very great poet and a world famous poet, but... he is no politician... having had night mares about Moslem rule in India he is shuddering with dread."<sup>42</sup>

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41. These four great Hindu leaders were responsible for the spread of Hindu nationalism in India. Their campaigning (i) the strenuous promotion of Hinduism in national politics, (ii) the advocacy of Hindi in Devnāgri script and (iii) the patronage of Suddhi-Saṅgathan movements alienated Moslems.

42. Editor, 'Rabibābur ātaṅka', Choltān, 8th yr., 4th no.; 18th Jyāāiṣṭha; 1st June, 1923.

(b) On the Moslem side.

(i) Tendency to censure Hinduised/pro-Hindu/or anti-Moslem Moslem authors.

Commenting upon a new monthly magazine called Naba Nur edited by Maulvi Emdad Ali, Islām-pracāraḥ in 1903 complained that, "despite...the editor being a Moslem, some Hindu authors also contribute to it articles and novels concerning their own community."<sup>43</sup> In its 8th yr. Islām-pracāraḥ complained of a "ghost" taking possession of "young 'Soltān'" and almost squeezing the life out of it. Apparently Soltān had rebelled "against its own religion, society and community...even the charge of treason has indirectly been brought against that ghost. We are sorry Soltān has so regrettably declined. If this national newspaper is managed by some suitable manager and editor, our delight will be unlimited."<sup>44</sup>

43. Ismail Hossain Siraji, 'Naba Nur o Jehād', Islām-pracāraḥ, 5th yr., 11th-12th no.; Agrahāyaṇ-Pāuṣ, 1310 B.S. (1903).

44. Editor, 'Jātiya o dharma sambād', Islām-pracāraḥ, 8th yr., 10th no. Islām-pracāraḥ, predominantly a 'Moslem' magazine, here criticises Soltān for being pro-Congress, pro-Nationalist, and holding secular views on Hindu-Moslem questions.

Kaikobad,<sup>45</sup> the author of Mahāśmaśān, according to Naba Nūr in 1906, was unable to "observe the development of any but brute force in Moslems...Kaikobad Saheb has... deemed it impossible to write an epic without using the word 'yavana', which Moslems have striven so hard and written so much to drive out of Bengali literature. How are we here after to tell Hindu authors to abandon this word?" Kaikobad was, Naba Nūr regretted, too boastful about himself and "the successfulness of his own work".<sup>46</sup>

Saogāt in 1919, however, disagreed and praised Mahāśmaśān in all respects: "if it be accorded the first place then to our way of thinking an epic worthy of the second has not yet been born in Moslem society....its language is so straight-forward, simple, euphonic, poetic and easily-flowing that with the exception of the great poet Nabin Chandra Sen alone it is unrivalled in Bengali

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45. Famous for his epic Mahāśmaśān Kāvya (1904), Kaikobad or Muhammad Kazem-al-Qoreshi (1858-1952) was the longest-lived Bengali poet. His other works include Aśrumālā (1895), Siba mandir (1921), Maharam Sarif (1932) and Smaśān bhasma (1938). Though bent on reawakening his co-religionists, Kaikobad, nevertheless, sincerely desired Hindu-Moslem harmony. His views on Hindu-Moslem relations as expressed in Mahāśmaśān caused him to fall a victim to serious controversies in the Moslem press.
46. Fazlar Rahman Khan, 'Mahāśmaśān Kāvya', Naba Nūr, 3rd yr., 10th no.; Māgh, 1312 B.S. (1906).

literature."<sup>47</sup>

An article in the same magazine the following month, however, attacked Mahāśmaśān as "drenched in eroticism.... Not all the imagery in Mahāśmaśān is praiseworthy, much of it is drawn from the tales about Hindu deities.... Excellence in an epic is not achieved merely by stamping upon it the imprint of Hinduism". Kaikobad, it alleged, was even to some extent guilty of pro-Maratha sympathies.<sup>48</sup> A further article in Saogāt in 1919 admitted that Kaikobad possessed poetic qualities but nevertheless accused him of failing "to evoke Moslem ideals" and "being Hinduised".<sup>49</sup>

"Anoṃyāra [1914] by Pandit Najibar Rahman",<sup>50</sup> Islām-darśan reported in 1920, "was the first Moslem novel. Shortly afterwards Moslem authors enthused over novel-writing. But

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47. Abul Kalam Mohammad Shamsuddin, 'Mahāśmaśān Kāvya', Saogāt, 1st yr., 8th no.; Aṣār, 1326 B.S. (1919).
48. Mohammad Wajed Ali, 'Mahāśmaśān samvande dui ekṭi kathā', Saogāt, 1st yr., 9th no.; Srāban, 1326 B.S. (1919).
49. Syed Emdad Ali, 'Pratibād - āmar uttar', Saogāt, 1st yr., 12th no.; Kārtik, 1326 B.S. (1919).
50. The novels of Najibar Rahman (1878-1923), a school teacher, still retain immense popularity. Besides Anoṃyārā (1914), which was printed more than thirty times, he also published Ād-Tārā bā Hāsan Gaṅgā Bāhamani (1917), Paripām (1918), Gariber meye (1923), Meherunnechā (1923) and Premer samādhi. Najibar Rahman aimed at social reforms consonant with Islam. Though not of high literary merit, his novels do faithfully portray contemporary social conditions, with a bias towards harmonious Hindu-Moslem relations.

unfortunately the majority are....unreadable...because.... not the least hesitation is felt about slighting our sacred Islam, attacking the sacred Qorān and Hādith, and showering abuse upon the Ulemā... These books are trash and pitchers of poison."<sup>51</sup>

The good qualities of "Nūr...., a newly published monthly magazine, edited by the poet Ismail Hossain Siraji<sup>52</sup> from Sirajganj", Islām-darśan alleged in 1920, "are destroyed by iconoclasm.... Intense rebelliousness towards the Śariyat which characterises the personal life of (Ismail Hossain).... also permeates this magazine... We hope... 'Nūr' will cultivate literature with....caution in regard to religion".<sup>53</sup>

Nūr was also censured by Bāṅga Nūr that same year for having a horse on its front page: "The person whose forehead

51. Mohammad Reyajuddin Ahmad, 'Adarśa upanyās', Islām-darśan, 1st yr., 3rd no.; Aṣār, 1327 B.S. (1920).

52. Eminently distinguished as an author, journalist, orator, socio-political worker and religious leader, Syed Ismail Hossain Siraji (1880-1931), published about 20 books (essays, novels and poems). Active in most anti-British political demonstrations - anti-Partition, Svadeśī, Khilāfat, Non-Cooperation and Civil Disobedience - he once visited Turkey in 1912 with the Red Crescent delegation. Anaḷ prabāha (1900), his book of patriotic verse, was proscribed by the Government: he served a two-year prison sentence for it. His greater contribution, however, was towards the launching of the Bengalee Moslem renaissance.

53. Editor, 'Sāmāyik sāhitya', Islām-darśan, 1st yr., 1st no.; Bāiśākh, 1327 B.S. (1920).

can be embellished by such an offence against Islam naturally gives rise to doubts in people's mind about his character."<sup>54</sup>

Islām-darśan in 1922 castigated Kazi Nazrul Islam,<sup>55</sup> editor of Dhūmketu, whose "bravado had already been displayed in his poem 'Bidrohī'..."<sup>56</sup> Eversince then 'Dhūmketu' has... been emitting poison against sacred Islam. Every line and page of his writings proclaim that this wild young man has received no Islamic instruction - his brain is cram full of Hindusim... The fellow is a complete incarnation of Satan... If there were a genuine Islamic regime then this Pharaoh or Nimrod would have been impaled or beheaded for certain."<sup>57</sup>

Sāmyabādī in 1924 regretted the lack of "Islamic vigour, which was Nazrul Islam's speciality", in Dolan Čāpā (1923). Moslems had previously thrilled over the "vigour" brought to

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54. Al Faruk, 'Anubikṣan', Bāṅga Nūr, 1st yr., 6th no.; Bâiśākh, 1327 B.S. (1920).
55. Kazi Nazrul Islam (1899-), Bengal's rebel poet and greatest poet of the Bengalee Moslems, was long neglected and despised by orthodox Moslems, presumably because of the secularist, humanistic note in his writings. Nevertheless, his was the boldest and most inspiring voice rousing Moslem Bengal.
56. Bidrohī (1921), i.e. 'the rebel', is Nazrul Islam's best known and most discussed poem: it made him famous almost overnight. Such was the sensation created following its publication in the weekly Bijlī that the paper, in order to meet public demand, had to be printed twice in the same week. The poem was also reprinted in a couple of other periodicals, Prabāsi and Moslem Bhārat.
57. Mohammad Reyajuddin Ahmad, 'Loktā Musalmān nā saytān', Islām-darśan, 3rd yr., 2nd no.; Kārtik, 1329 B.S. (1922).

the Bengali language by "the touch of Nazrul Islam's genius". But that "immense vitality (has)...either become moribund or actually deadened beneath the weight of a hostile, accursed atmosphere."<sup>58</sup>

Choltān, too, in 1924 was disappointed with Nazrul Islam, especially with his 'Bidrohī', whose "whole spirit" was "inspired by Hindu ideals... This perversity of his is especially distressing to us, because no other poet has been born in Bengalee Moslem society with talent such as his."<sup>59</sup>

Commenting on "'Agni Bīṇā'<sup>60</sup>... by a recalcitrant young man...highly praised by the Hindu community,...Nazrul Islam,... an irreligious disgrace to our community", Islām-darśan in 1926 alleged that, it "lacks the flavour of spirituality, is devoid of religious feeling....untrue and unauthentic.... Most of his verses are mere incoherent ravings....filled with the ideas of a hemp-addict...saturated in indications of the divisibility of God such as the worship of Śiva, the eulogy of Kālī, the adoration of Durgā and the invocation

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58. 'Pustak paricaṣṭ', Sāmyabādī, 2nd yr., 2nd no.; Fālgun, 1330 B.S. (1924).
59. Syed Emdād Ali, 'Baṅga bhāṣāy Mochlem prabhāb', Choltān, 8th yr., 41st no.; 17th Fālgun, 1330 B.S.; 29th February, 1924.
60. Nazrul Islam's best known book of verse, published in 1922, it immediately created a tremendous stir and soon went into several editions. So provocative were its poems that Government had to proscribe it for fear of spreading sedition.

of Sarasvatī.... This wretched atheist has in comparing Mr. C.R.Das with Hajrat Ibrahim [Prophet Abraham] and a dissolute prostitute with Bibi Mariam [the Virgin Mary] and in voicing whatever comes to his mouth....regarding Rozā, Nāmāz, Hajj, Zākāt, Kitāb, Qorān and Pīrs and prophets.... displayed more vileness than accursed Satan himself."<sup>61</sup>

The previous year Moslem darpan censured the poet Nazrul Islam for having compared Mr. C.R.Das to Hajrat Ibrahim in his Indra patan. Nazrul, Moslem darpan declared, ought to be punished, possibly even in the courts: "the curse of God will swiftly descend upon him."<sup>62</sup>

Poet Golam Mostafa<sup>63</sup> was condemned in 1926 by Islām-darśan as "blatantly Hinduised".<sup>64</sup> "The majority of the poems in his 'Rakta Rāg'" were "virtually rehash of the works of others..."

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61. Abu Nur, 'Baṅgīyā Moslem sāhitya o sāhityik', Islām-darśan, 5th yr., 5th no.; Fālgun, 1332 B.S. (1926).

62. Editor, 'Islām-bāirī Musalmān kabi', Moslem darpan, 1st yr., 8th no.; August, 1925.

63. A major Moslem poet, Golam Mostafa (1897-1964), started by assiduously following Tagorean style and diction; and, indeed, he was complimented upon his first volume of verse, Raktarāg (1924) by his master himself, Rabindranath. Golam Mostafa also wrote good prose. His biography of Prophet Muhammad, Biśva Nabī (1942) has been acclaimed as remarkable.

64. Though once censured himself for being 'blatantly Hinduised', Golam Mostafa after the creation of Pakistan rejected Nazrul Islam, whose contribution to the Bengalee Moslem renaissance had been greatest, as a user of 'Hindu' symbols and 'idolatrous imagery'.

absolutely devoid of national sentiment... One even doubts whether he is a Moslem...we cannot consider...[such a person] impassioned by an alien religion as anything other than the trash of our society."<sup>65</sup>

(ii) Tendency to praise pro-Moslem authors.

A. Hindu.

In 1922 Bāngiā-Musalmān-Sāhitya-Patrikā published an article praising Rabindranath for having diffused in his

65. Abu Nur, op.cit.

One should note the authors of these articles. It is possible that religious arguments were being used to destroy literary reputations, when perhaps the attacks were inspired by mere personal spite. There is at least one extract which may be quoted in support of this hypothesis:

"No religious minded Moslem can help being upset by the war which has recently broken out in Moslem journalistic circles in Calcutta. In this war one Moslem embellishes another with such big titles as atheist, devil, infidel and Nimrod and showers down bullets and bombs of abuse in the language of fish-wives which is so delightful to hear, so sweet and so beautifully colourful. We had never imagined that well-educated gentlemen could attempt to make such a vulgar exhibition of himself in public.... Upon investigation it appears that the cause of this abuse and quarrelsomeness is nothing but a journalistic feud and personal animosity... When one witnesses the vulgarity of these journalists, whose papers are the heralds of our national uplift and communal advancement, then one's head bows in shame, sorrow and regret." (Mohammad Abdul Khaleq Amirabadi, 'Sāmbādik mahale Kaferī fatōyā', Saogāt, 6th yr., 5th no.; Agraḥāyaṇ, 1335 B.S. [1928])

Furthermore, it should be noted that though attacked in the contemporary Moslem Press, all these authors Emdad Ali, Ismail Hossain Sārāji, Kaikobad, Nazrul Islam, Golam Mostafa etc. were subsequently acclaimed as heroes of Moslem renaissance in Bengal.

poetry so many Islamic ideas and concepts:<sup>66</sup> "Any Moslem could easily accept his ideas and concepts. No other poet has been able to express so well in Bengali the feelings of the Moslems. But why do we say only Bengali, no non-Moslem poet in the world could have written such things..... We do not find any antagonism towards Islam anywhere in the whole vast output of Rabindranath. On the contrary, his writings contain so many Islamic ideas and ideals that he could easily be called a Moslem. It would not be an exaggeration even to say that Rabindranath's writings are completely free from those concepts which are intensely antagonistic to Islam, such as idolatry, polytheism, atheism, reincarnation and renunciation."<sup>67</sup>

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66. Concepts in Rabindranath's metaphysical poetry, especially his Gitanjali (1910) are reminiscent of those of Islam. Possibly these similarities are ultimately derivable from his father's study of the Persian Sufi poet, Hafez; or possibly Rabindranath's Vaishnavite propensities exposed him to Sufism. At all events, his Brāhma mind could surely co-exist with the Islamic concept of the oneness of God and the aversion to idolatry. Critics have, it may be added, also found similarities between Rabindranath's Jiban Debatā and Sufistic symbolism. Consequently, sympathetic readers may easily discover the presence of 'Islamic' ideas in Tagore.

67. Golam Mostafa, 'Islām o Rabīndranāth', Banglīya-Musalman-Sāhitya-Patrikā, 5th yr., 2nd no.; Śrāvan, 1329 B.S. (1922). Surprisingly, this same author, Golam Mostafa was in later years reluctant to accept Tagore as part of Bengali literature in East Pakistan.

B. Moslem.

In 1903 Islām-pracāraḥ published an article defending Ismail Hossain Siraji from abusive attacks by Mihir o Sudhākar on the grounds that "each of his articles and poems in 'Islām-pracāraḥ'...is beneficial to our society. All his writings and speeches promote our interests... When one reads the attacks upon him made by his opponents one feels vividly the envy and hatred towards him that is couched in each letter and line."<sup>68</sup> This last sentence suggests that the attacks upon him were motivated by personal animosity rather than religious considerations.

Though attacked for showing considerable Hindu influence in his book of verses Dāli (1912) Emdad Ali (1880-1956) was, nevertheless, praised by Saogāt in 1919 for having written such "a national poem...in the desire...to awaken a sense of identity amongst Moslems by releasing them from their trance of self-forgetfulness... The book is well-suited to the present state of our society. Some of the individual poems in the collection, especially the national and personal ones, greatly

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68. Ibne Hamid, 'Paraśrikātaratā', Islām-pracāraḥ, 5th yr., 7th-8th no.; Śrāvaṇ-Bhādra, 1310 B.S. (1903).

pleased us."<sup>69</sup>

In 1926 Islām-darśan put up a similar defence for Ismail Hossain Siraji as had been put up by Islām-pracāraḥ in 1903. It was admitted that Siraji was strongly influenced by Hem Chandra but nevertheless Islām-darśan maintained, "his poems and epics....(do) contain Islamic ideas. It ought, therefore, to be acknowledged that his writings are conducive to the construction of our national life. And so he is undoubtedly one of our leading national poets."<sup>70</sup>

Though admitting that Kazi Nazrul Islam had now (1926) strayed as a 'Bidrohā' (rebel) from his previous tendency to write "beautiful poems....instinct with Islamic sentiment.... such as 'Moharam', 'Sāt-il-Arab', 'Korbānī', 'Fātehā-i-doyāj dahan' etc.", Islām-darśan maintained that, had he been criticised with patience and generosity, he might well have been brought back to the true path once more.<sup>71</sup>

"When we ask ourselves who ushered in the new age in our literature.....", Islām-darśan mused in 1925, "the name which automatically peeps at the door of our mind is that of the

69. Mohammad Abdul Hokim, 'Dāli', Saogāt, 1st yr., 10th no.; Bhādra, 1326 B.S. (1919).

70. Abu Nur, 'Baṅgīya Moslem sāhitya o sāhityik', Islām-darśan, 5th yr., 5th no.; Fālgun, 1332 (1926).

71. Pathik, 'Sāhitya samālocanār Kayeḳti Kathā', Islām-darśan, 5th yr., 7th no.; Bāiśākh, 1333 B.S. (1926).

late Mir Mosharraf Hossain....the father of our modern literature and...the literary preceptor of the Moslems of Bengal. It was he who pushed aside the impure dobhāṣī verse...and established on the golden throne of our literature tender and chaste prose and verse."<sup>72</sup>

C. Puthi literature.<sup>73</sup>

Despite the praise heaped on Mir Mosharraf Hossain for ending "impure dobhāṣī", Al-Eslām was five years earlier (1920) stating that Puthi literature in dobhāṣī was "a hundred times better than novels in modern Hinduised literary Bengali". This literature was once fashionable in Bengalee Moslem society and from it people learnt much about religion, the lives of prophets and saints and heroic Moslem men and women. Besides being thereby inspired with national

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72. Abu Nur, 'Baṅgīyā Musalmān sāhitya o Sāhityik', Islām-darśan, 5th yr., 3rd no.; Pāṣ, 1332 B.S. (1925).

73. Puthi means 'manuscript book', but Puthi sāhitya or Puthi literature has come to mean a special kind of Bengali Moslem verse literature in mixed diction or dobhāṣī Bengali, made up of lexical items from Bengali, Arabic, Persian, Urdu, Hindi and Sanskrit. The main themes of this literature are Islamic religion, rituals, history, legends, romances, epics and hagiographies. This literature attained great popularity in the 18th and 19th centuries. For further accounts see Rev.J.Long, Returns related to Publications in the Bengali Language in 1857, 1859, p.30; S.K.Chatterji, Origin and Development of Bengali Language, Vol.I, 1926, pp.210-11; Q.A.Mannan, The Emergence and Development of Dobhasi Literature in Bengal, 1966.

feeling and religious fervour they were instructed in ethics by reading Kitābs on Machlā (texts on religious problems) and Satī nāmā, Nūr nāmā, Nabī nāmā, Kāchāchal Ambiyā (the four popular titles in Puthi literature).<sup>74</sup>

"It will not do", Choltān declared in 1923, "to ridicule Puthi literature. For it is that which is the source of our pride... In the past 50 or 60 years you have not been able to show one tenth of what the authors of Puthi literature revealed in Bengali concerning the Moslem nation and Islamic religion."<sup>75</sup>

Similar ideas were expressed in Choltān the following year where it was regretted that these "Moslem authors of Puthi...have virtually been driven from sophisticated society... Their work was going well, it was we who destroyed it. By selling ourselves to purified Bengali we have lost whatever capital we possessed as Moslems."<sup>76</sup>

A similar note of regret was sounded in Sāmyabādī in 1925: "...(Puthis) contained in full measure the Islamic

74. Farrokh Ahmad Nejampuri, 'Sāhityer gati', Al-Eslām, 6th yr., 4th no.; Srāban, 1327 B.S. (1920).

75. 'Bāmlā sāhitya o Hindu Mochalmān', Choltān, 8th yr., 9th no.; 21st Aṣār, 1330 B.S.p 6th July, 1923.

76. Syed Emdad Ali, 'Baṅga bhāṣāy Mochlem prabhāb', Choltān, 8th yr., 41st no.; 17th Fālgun, 1330 B.S.; 29th February, 1924.

ideas which sustained them... One day we became exceedingly eager to strangle that literature...and devoted ourselves to the cultivation of Bengali inspired by Hindu ideas.

Consequently, we became separated from the Moslem masses.

Nevertheless, the publishers of Puthis of Baṭṭalā and Sibdaha<sup>77</sup> maintained contact with them...(we struck) at the very root of our literature's growth and development.... It was the composers of Puthis who first began trading in Islamic ideas and it is as a result of their strenuous efforts that Moslem Bengali literature began to grow."<sup>78</sup>

(iii) Tendency to exhort authors to write on pro-Islamic themes.

Commenting upon a poetry magazine called Laharī (1900) Islām-pracāra regretted that so little Moslem poetry was included: "The main aim of this journal ought to be to encourage his fellow Moslems [and]...to discuss the works of old Moslem poets...from East Bengal that are filled with

77. These were the two most important marketing centres for Puthis in Bengal. Baṭṭalā in Calcutta housed most of the publication firms. These firms normally published such books at a very cheap rate, in bad printing and with poor get-up. Hence, all publications of inferior quality in both content and production, whether from Baṭṭalā or not, are popularly known as Baṭṭalār puthi i.e. Baṭṭalā editions.

78. Syed Emdad Ali, 'Bāṅgālar Musalmān Sāhitya-sebiganer prati', Sāmyabādī, 3rd yr., 6th no.; Kārtik, 1332 B.S. (1925).

beautiful imaginary verses... They ought all, we think, to be collected and published...works containing the national diction of the Moslems ought not to be ignored."<sup>79</sup>

"We must show by our novels and dramas", Al-Eslām declared in 1916, "how Moslems ought to be, how their domestic life ought to be, how their political life ought to be. There is no point in merely writing love stories. Moslem novels and dramas should contain a Moslem flavour. Otherwise, as far as our national life is concerned, they are useless."<sup>80</sup>

In the same article the contributor continued to argue that not only should Moslems cultivate their 'national literature' but also their 'national history' so as to refute "with incontrovertible historical evidence the base, far-fetched tales about our princesses and queens."<sup>81</sup> The study of history would bring another benefit: "No other branch of literature can inspire people, can awaken their

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79. Editor, 'Prāpta granthādir Samālocanā', Islām-pracāraḥ, 3rd yr., 5th-6th no. That Islām-pracāraḥ was right is proved by the four volumes of Eastern Bengal Ballads, (Compiled and edited by Dr. D.C.Sen.) that were later published, which contain many Moslem works.

80. Mohammad Shahidullah M.A.B.L., 'Amāder (Sāhityik) daridrātā', Al-Eslām, 2nd yr., 2nd no.; Jyāaiṣṭha, 1323 B.S. (1916).

81. This refers to Moslem heroines as depicted in historical novels and dramas by Hindus.

self-respect and can bring high aspirations into their hearts as can ancient national history."

Returning to the theme of "Islam's erring genius", Kazi Nazrul Islam, Choltān in 1924 expressed the hope that "in future he will enrich Bengali literature by composing works characterised by Islamic ideas".<sup>82</sup>

(iv) Tendency to disparage Hindu authors and exalt Moslems.

In 1918 Al-Eslām published an article eulogising Mir Mosharraf Hossain who "set fluttering our national flag marked with the crescent moon beside the Hindu flag in the literary sky of Bengal..... His language was more simple and straight forward than Bankim Chandra's and yet, nevertheless, powerful. His book could be read by Hindus, Moslems and Christians alike. Amongst the innumerable books of this age his was like the full moon.... Today in this literary gathering we proudly sing the praise of this author of 'Biṣād Sindhu'. "<sup>83</sup>

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82. Editor, 'Ālocanā', Choltān, 8th yr., 39th no.; 3rd Fālgun, 1330 B.S.; 15th February, 1924.  
Nazrul Islam's secular views, it may be noted, made it impossible for even Choltān to accommodate him, even though in other respects Nazrul's rebelliousness might have been thought to accord well with Choltān's dedication to the independence movement.
83. Ismail Hossain Siraji, 'Bāṅgālā bhāṣār paricayyā', Al-Eslām, 3rd yr., 10th no.; Māgh, 1324 B.S. (1918).

"Even in the presence of Hindu artists and poets", Baṅgīya-Musalmān-Sāhitya-Patrikā declared in 1920, the first book of Kazi Abdul Odud,<sup>84</sup> Mīr Paribār (1918) was something of which Moslems could be proud displaying, as it did, "a clear glow of talent....(not) obtained from any Moslem author before."<sup>85</sup>

"Those who can not restrain their passion for novel-reading," Choltān argued in 1923, "ought to satisfy it by reading the social novel called 'Mālekā'. Whereas by reading novels by Bankim Chandra and his famous imitators, Moslems are forced to lower their heads and look glum, by reading books like 'Mālekā' their heads will be high, their minds ennobled and gladdened."<sup>86</sup> Another serious contribution to Moslem Bengali literature was sympathetically received by Choltān the following year: "in its purity of language, its facile flow, its skill in description" Pārasya-pratibhā<sup>87</sup>

84. Kazi Abdul Odud (1894-1970), a well-known essayist, was among the limited number of young Moslem intellectuals who formed the Śikhā group in Dacca. Some of his important works are: Rabindra Kābya Pāṭh (1928), Kabiguru Gyete (1946), Sāśvata Baṅga (1951) and Kabiguru Rabindranāth (1962).

85. Khaiyam, 'Mīr paribār', Baṅgīya-Musalmān-Sāhitya-Patrikā, 3rd yr., 1st no.; Bâisākh, 1327 B.S. (1920).

86. 'Mālekā', Choltān, 8th yr., 9th no.; 21st Aṣārḥ, 1330 B.S.; 6th July, 1923.

87. A book of essays on the lives and works of Persian poets by Mohammad Bar katullah (1898- ).

(1924) reminded Choltān "of a Persian garden."<sup>88</sup>

By 1928 Moslem confidence had grown to such an extent that the editor of Māsik Mohāmmadī did not hesitate to compare Tagore's Gītāñjali (1910) unfavourably with "many second-and third-rate Persian and Urdu poets";<sup>89</sup> and Moyājjin declared that Nazrul Islam had not only fulfilled Moslems society's lack of an epic poet but was also gradually enlivening it with his proud piping from his Biṣer bāṣī (1924) ("Poisonous flute"), which had "brought a new pulsation of life...not only to Moslems but to non-Moslems as well. His skill in diction, his adroitness in versification....have like a bright, wildly stimulating flame brought to Bengali literature a new age, so that Moslems, seeing one of their brothers enthroned high,....now feel their national existence."<sup>90</sup>

By the following year Nazrul was completely rehabilitated in Bengali Moslem society: a public meeting in Chittagong accepted him as "the young Moslem leader of Bengal" and censured all the "groundless allegations against him."<sup>91</sup>

88. 'Pārasya-pratibhā', Choltān, 8th yr., 37th no.; 18th Māgh, 1330 B.S.; 1st February, 1924.

89. Editor, 'Alocanā', Māsik Mohāmmadī, 1st yr., 4th no.; Māgh, 1334 B.S. (1928).

90. Editor, 'Nazrul samvardhanā prasāṅge ekti kathā', Moyājjin, 1st yr., 3rd no.; Kārtik, 1335 B.S. (1928).

91. 'Caṭṭagrāme Nazrul samvardhanā', Sāptāhik Saogāt, 1st yr., 36th no.;; 11th Māgh, 1335 B.S.p 25th January, 1929.

## III

Attempts to break away from communalism.(a) On the Hindu side.

As early as 1904 Kohinur was paying tribute to Dinesh Chandra Sen<sup>92</sup> for the sympathy he had shown towards Moslems not only in his Baṅga bhāṣā o sāhitya (1896) but also in his account of Timur,<sup>93</sup> who until then had been thought of "as merely a Moslem blacksheep, wicked and avaricious... The respect and devotion of Moslems towards" Dinesh Chandra Sen would, therefore, be further enhanced. "Our sincere wish is that Dinesh babu may live long and continue in this way to enrich his mother-tongue."<sup>94</sup>

The "national" literatures of the Hindus and Moslems had, Al-Eslām argued in 1916, been "moving in completely different directions." There had been no contact between them and, indeed, they had each been attempting to move

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92. Dr. Dinesh Chandra Sen (1866-1939), known as the first noted historian of Bengali Language and Literature, taught Bengali in Calcutta University. He published more than 60 books. Some of his important publications are Baṅga bhāṣā o sāhitya (1896), History of Bengali Language and Literature (1911); Chaitanya and his Companions (1917), Eastern Bengal Ballads, 4 vols. (1923-1932) and Bṛhat Baṅga (1935).
93. Bengalee Moslems, it would seem, intended to inspire themselves from the exploits of a Moslem hero in Timur Lane (1336-1405), who invaded India in 1398-99.
94. Manuyar Hossain, 'Māsik Sāhitya Samālocanā', Kohinur, 5th yr., 4th no.; Śrābaṅ, 1311 B.S. (1904).

further away from the other. This was deplorable, but fortunately a group of Hindu writers have realised it. They are, as far as possible, using Moslem thoughts and words in Bengali literature<sup>95</sup> and for this they deserve the thanks of all Moslems...Rabindranath's lyrics now echo the immortal love songs of the Persian poets<sup>96</sup>.... Many Hindu writers....frequently quote Persian verse. Even blocks in their books are cut in Persian fashion... Dear Moslem authors....do not harbour a grudge against the whole of Hindu society because some Hindu authors have maligned you".<sup>97</sup>

The following year Al-Eslām paid tribute to Akshay Kumar Maitreya for eradicating the "disrepute into which Siraj [Sirajuddaula] and Kasim [Mir Kasim] had fallen."<sup>98</sup>

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95. A notable instance is Satyendranath Datta (1882-1922), who utilised Moslem history and Perso-Arabic diction in such well-known poems as Tāj, Itmad-uddaulā and Kabar-i-Nurjāhan. The style he devised was later successfully adopted by Mohitlal Majumdar and others.
96. Many of Tagore's love lyrics seem to re-echo Persian Sufistic mysticism. See also p. 217f.n. 66.
97. Sheikh Habibar Rahman, 'Jātīya Sāhitye Hindu Musalmān', Al-Eslām, 2nd yr., 1st no.; Bâisākh, 1323 B.S. (1916).
98. This refers to Akshay Kumar Maitreya's two historical works, Sirājuddaulā (1898) and Mir Kāsim (1906), which were the first serious attempt successfully to exonerate Nawab Sirajuddaula and Nawab Mir Kasim from the charges brought against them by foreign historians.

Is not this the best way to establish sincere affection between the two communities?"<sup>99</sup>

(b) On the Moslem side.

After lamenting the bias exhibited in Pratāpāditya, Naba Nur in 1905 pleaded for the exercise of restraint and caution by both Moslem and Hindu authors when depicting low characters from each other's community. "Is it not our duty", Naba Nur argued, "to study the best parts of our past history so that the social ideals of both communities may receive appropriate...respect...?"<sup>100</sup> Commenting on other plays by Dvijendralal, Al-Eslām in 1916 put in a similar plea for mutual tolerance and compassion between the two communities: "Both....are brothers and must therefore be depicted side by side on an equal footing. Otherwise, neither of our communities will fare well."<sup>101</sup>

Mutual tolerance was again the theme of a public address published in Bāṅgīyā-Musalmān-Sāhitya-Patrikā in 1919,

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99. Editorial comment, Al-Eslām, 3rd yr., 3rd no.; Aṣārah, 1324 B.S. (1917).

100. Maolvi Imdadul Haq, B.A., 'Gryāṇḍ thiyeṭāre Pratāpāditya', Naba Nur, 3rd yr., 6th no.; Aśvin, 1312 B.S. (1905).

101. S.M. Akbaruddin B.A., 'Bartamān Bāṅgālā Sāhitye Musalmāner sthān', Al-Eslām, 2nd yr., 9th no.; Pāuṣ, 1323 B.S. (1916).

where it was claimed that novelists should be "idealistic" not "destructive"; i.e. they should not "through ignorance or childish quarrelsomeness" expend all their energies in attacking others. "If we fling all the stones that we possess upon our enemies", the author asked, "then what are we to repair our own dilapidated house with?"<sup>102</sup>

Saogāt in 1919 lamented the deleterious effect of drama upon Moslem young men and commented: "The past glories of all of us, irrespective of our nation or religion, ought to be held up before us so that our nation would be directed towards good ideals. If this happened then the birth of the play and theatre would be worthwhile."<sup>103</sup>

It was noted earlier that Bankim Chandra had a predilection for making Moslem girls fall madly in love with Siva-like Hindu boys. Baṅgīya-Musalmān-Sāhitya-Patrikā in 1921 deplored the spirit of retaliation on the Moslem side. It observed, "Many of these novels by Moslems show the love of a Moslem hero for a Hindu heroine. In the realm

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102. Mohammad Akram Khan, 'Sabhāpatir abhibhāṣaṇ', Baṅgīya-Musalmān-Sāhitya-Patrikā, 1st yr., 4th no.; Māgh, 1325 B.S. (1919).

103. Editor, 'Baṅgīya nāṭyakathāḥ', Saogāt, 1st yr., 7th no.; Jyāiṣṭha, 1326 B.S. (1919).

of love there may be no communal discrimination and from the literary standpoint this may create variety. But the composition of literature is one thing and retaliation is another. I sincerely hope that no one will introduce this kind of variety merely out of a wish for retaliation."<sup>104</sup>

The same theme is touched on again by the same journal in its same issue: "uptill now we were acquainted only with the misrepresentations of the characters of Moslem men and women as presented by Hindu authors....some of our authors, out of a desire to humiliate the enemy, even attempted to retaliate as is proved by such books as 'Bankim duhitā'."<sup>105</sup>

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104. M. Ansari, 'Sāhitye bāicitra', Baṅgīya-Musalmān-Sāhitya-Patrikā, 4th yr., 3rd no.; Kārtik, 1328 B.S. (1921). In retaliation against the unsympathetic treatment of Moslem characters by Hindu authors, some Moslems produced historical novels, in which Moslems were the victors, Hindus the vanquished; Moslems displayed heroism, Hindus cowardice; Hindu heroines fell madly in love with Moslem heroes and eventually embraced Islam. Some such novels are: Ismail Hossain Siraji's Tārābāī and Rāyṅandini, Matiar Rahman's Mokṣaprāpti, Najibar Rahman's Ād-Tarā and Sheikh Idris Ali's Bankim-duhitā. Moslem bitterness against Bankim Chandra went so far that Syed Abul Hossain composed indecent parodies on his Sitārām, Debicāudhurānī, Anandamath and Kapālkunḍalā.
105. Syed Emdad Ali, 'Sekh Andu', Baṅgīya-Musalmān-Sāhitya-Patrikā, 4th yr., 3rd no.; Kārtik, 1328 B.S. (1921).

In 1926 Saogāt held Nazrul Islam to be "the national poet of Bengal. His poetry expresses the sufferings of our whole nation, both Bengalee Moslems and Bengalee Hindus. To express the sufferings of this nation one's compositions must bear the impress of both Islamic and Hindu sentiment."<sup>106</sup>

## IV

Allied Topics(a) The criticism of literature on purely literary criteria.

In 1903 Mihir o Sudhākar contemptuously dismissed much of the literature issuing from cheap presses as trash: "we have no need of the second-rate. We may not possess.... any distinguished author, but this bad reputation is better than permitting the emergence of bad authors. For they would.....only increase trashy literature of cheap presses."<sup>107</sup>

In 1904 Naba Nur cried, "If a poem could be created

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106. Abul Kalam Mohammad Shamsuddin, 'Kāvya sāhitye Bāngālī Musalmān', Saogāt, 4th yr., 7th no.; Pāuṣ, 1333 B.S. (1926).  
It will be seen from the controversies in 1920s over Nazrul Islam in Moslem press that Saogāt fought an almost single-handed fight to rehabilitate the poet in Moslem society.
107. Spaṣṭabādī, 'Aśani sampāt', Mihir o Sudhākar, 11th Bhādra, 1310 B.S. (1903).

merely by heaping together a collection of rarely-used lexical items than even this poem ['Paritrān]<sup>108</sup> could doubtless be considered excellent. The author's faults could have been forgiven at least on account of the importance of his theme, if only his description had not been rendered ugly and lifeless by empty pretentiousness. It is extremely regrettable that through lack of restraint he has dissipated his own natural powers. A new author ought not to be so unrestrained, pretentious and cocky when writing poetry.<sup>109</sup> The following year Naba Nur praised an authoress Mrs. R.S. Hossain, (1880-1932) for tackling "so many social questions", but admonished her for "merely...whipping society... If she could describe the sufferings of women with restraint in unaggressive language, the ties of conservatism in our society would loosen of their own accord... By whipping right and left, as she pleases, she will not accomplish anything."<sup>110</sup>

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108. This is a poetical work (1903) by Sheikh Fazlal Karim (1882-1936), where the poet narrates the life history of Prophet Muhammad.

109. 'Grantha samālocanā', Naba Nur, 2nd yr., 7th no.; Kārtik, 1311 B.S. (1904).

110. 'Grantha samālocanā - Maticur', Naba Nur, 3rd yr., 5th no.; Bhādra, 1312 B.S. (1905).

This refers to Mrs. R.S.Hossain's prose-work Maticur (1905), in which she bitterly satirises the narrowness and orthodox attitudes of Moslem society in regard to women folk. She attacks Purdāh, demands for rights for women and female emancipation. Indeed, Maticur created quite a sensation at the time.

In 1919 Bāṅgīya-Musalmān-Sāhitya-Patrikā praised Anoyārā for its beauty and lucidity of description concluding that it was "one of the best novels on the market."<sup>111</sup> And in 1924 a book similar to Samuel Smiles' 'Self help' namely Unnata jīban by (Doctor) Lutfar Rahman (1889-1936) was described as "an invaluable addition to Bengali literature... We are delighted to see that Dacca University has included it in its Matriculation syllabus."<sup>112</sup>

An article in Saogāt in 1926 compared Moslem authors with Hindus without condemning either. When describing Kaykobad as "the true pupil of the great poet Nabin Chandra", Saogāt obviously intended it as a compliment. And, similarly in describing Mozammel Haq,<sup>113</sup> Ismail Hossain Siraji and Abul Ma'Ali Mohammad Hamid Ali<sup>114</sup> as disciples of Madhusudan

111. Golam Mostafa, 'Anoyārā', Bāṅgīya-Musalmān-Sāhitya-Patrikā, 2nd yr., 1st no.; Bâisākh, 1326 B.S. (1919).

112. 'Sāhitya svarup', Choltān, 8th yr., 37th no.; 18th Māgh, 1330 B.S.; 1st February, 1924.

113. Mozammel Haq (1860-1933) was distinguished both as a poet and a prose writer. Among Moslems his position is next to Mir Mosharrif Hossain and Kazi Nazrul Islam. Like his other literary colleagues he, too, aimed at a Bengalee Moslem renaissance. His works totalling about 15 in number include poetry, novels, histories and biographies. He also published the first poetry-magazine, Laharī (1900) and edited the literary journal, Moslem Bhārat (1920). His book of verse, Jātiya foyārā (1912), was once proscribed by Government on account of its highly provocative patriotic poems.

114. Though of small merit as a creative writer, Abul Ma'Ali Mohammad Hamid Ali (1875-?) was fairly well-known in his day. His avowed aim was to produce a 'separate literature' for

(continued on next page.....)

Datta's (1824-1873) genius, the journal was clearly complimenting them on the poetic power and power of language and patriotism they had managed to imbibe from their master. Objective considerations nevertheless forced Saogāt to conclude that, despite certain inspiring qualities, these attempts to imitate Madhusudan's Meghnād badh Kāvya (1861) failed to achieve the same standard.<sup>115</sup>

(b) The comparative position of Moslem Press and Literature.

As early as 1898 Kohinur was acknowledging the Moslem and Hindu communities as the twin sons of Mother India. The Moslems had, however, so far failed to achieve equality with Hindus in regard to literature. But they now saw that their hopes of achieving national improvement would remain for ever unrealised unless they paid heed to the cultivation of literature.<sup>116</sup>

A similar note was sounded by Naba Nūr in 1903 with this difference - Naba Nūr saw Bengalee Moslems' best hopes

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(.....continued from previous page)

- Moslems; he produced, however, two narrative poems, Kāsembadh Kāvya (1905) and Jaynaloddhār Kāvya (1907).
115. Abul Kalam Mohammad Shamsuddin, 'Kāvya Sāhitye Bāngālī Musalmān', Saogāt, 4th yr., 3rd no.; Bhādra, 1333 B.S. (1926).
116. Editor, 'Amāder nibedan', Kohinur, 1st yr., 1st no.; Aṣār, 1305 B.S. (1898).

of genuine progress in the construction of a national literature of their own, rather than in imitating Hindus. Bengali must be enriched with "Moslem thought, aesthetics and vigour imported from our sacred national languages Arabic, Persian and Urdu... Moslem literature, history, biographies, theology and philosophy should be translated into Bengali on a very large scale...."<sup>117</sup> Naba Nūr

had been saying the same thing two months earlier urging each and every Bengalee Moslem to "invigorate" and "embellish" Moslem Bengali literature with translations of "sparkling jewels" from Arabic and Persian.<sup>118</sup>

Islām-pracāra that same year gave some indication of why it was that Bengalee Moslem society was so backward in regard to literature: altogether their writers still probably numbered less than a hundred and their readers scarcely exceeded two thousand. Furthermore, the general level of education in Bengalee Moselm society was low. Few authors would have reached Matriculation standard in

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117. Ismail Hossain Siraji, 'Sāhitya Sakti o jāti saṅgaṭhan, Naba Nūr, 1st yr., 3rd no.; Aṣārh, 1310 B.S. (1903).

118. Editorial, Naba Nūr, 1st yr., 1st no.; Bâisākh, 1310 B.S. (1903).

English and the one or two graduates then writing were still students. Whether they would continue cultivating literature later was uncertain. "Consequently we must remain dependent upon these semi-educated young men."<sup>119</sup>

In 1916 Al-Eslām proposed that Bengali be taught in Arabic Mādrāssās so that pupils could translate into Bengali from Arabic, Persian and Urdu. It was shameful that the Qorān and Hādith were first translated into Bengali by a Brāhma and that Golestā and Hāfiz had similarly been translated by non-Moslems<sup>120</sup> as also had the Siḡār-ul-Mutākṡārīn<sup>121</sup> and Riḡāz-us-Sālātīn.<sup>122</sup>

119. Ibne Hamīd, 'Paraśrīkātaratā', Islām-pracāraḡ, 5th yr., 7th-8th no.; Śrābaṅ-Bhādra, 1310 B.S. (1903).

120. The first translator of the Qorān and Hādith into Bengali was a Brāhma, Girishchandra Sen (1834-1910). His Korān Śarīf in 3 parts was published between 1881 and 1886 and Hādīs-purvabībhāḡ in 1892. He also rendered Diwan-i-Hāfiz, Golestā and Bustā from Persian into Bengali. Much earlier Krishnachandra Majumdar (1837-1906) had published Sadbhāb Satak (1861), renderings from Persian of the Sufi poets, Sheikh Sadi and Hafez.

121. The first part of the Siḡār-ul-Matākṡārīn, (a history of the Indian empire written in Persian) was translated into Bengali by Gaurasundar Mitra and published in 1915.

122. The Bengali translation of Golam Hossain Khan's Riḡāz-us-Sālātīn (a history of Bengal written in Persian) by Rampran Gupta was published in 1907. Ismail Hossain Siraji, 'Sāhitya o jātlīya jīban', Al-Eslām, 2nd yr., 3rd no.; Aṡārḡ, 1323 (1916).

In April, 1918 Baṅgīya-Musalmān-Sāhitya-Patrikā reported on the Baṅgīya-Musalmān-Sāhitya-Samiti<sup>123</sup> (Moslem Bengal Literary Association) and in January, 1919 the Patrikā published an address where the author demonstrated the need for such a Samiti to stimulate Moslem authors to enrich their mother-tongue with translations from Arabic and Persian, "to concert the scattered energies of Moslem writers" and to save them from the humiliation inherent in attending Hindu-dominated organisations like the Baṅgīya Sahitya Pariṣad<sup>124</sup> and Baṅga Sāhitya Sammelan.<sup>125</sup>

Reporting on the comparative position of the Moslem Press in 1923 Choltān lamented that Bengalee Moslems still did not possess a single daily in Bengali<sup>126</sup> despite there

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123. An association of Bengalee Moslem writers, founded on September 4, 1911 in Calcutta with the specific aims of "preserving Moslems' own individuality, and demonstrating their individual identity" in Bengali literature. Presumably owing to Hindu dominance in Baṅgīya Sāhitya Pariṣad Moslems were prompted to set up an exclusively Moslem association, which held annual conferences (Baṅgīya Musalmān Sāhitya Sammelan), and published a journal, Baṅgīya-Musalmān-Sāhitya Patrikā.
124. An Academy for the cultivation and promotion of Bengali literature, founded on April 29, 1894 and still functioning. Among its manifold activities, the Academy regularly publishes the Baṅgīya-Sāhitya-Pariṣat-Patrikā, a distinguished research journal; holds annual literary conferences (Baṅgīya Sāhitya Sammelan) and has, upto now, published many valuable texts.
125. Mohammad Akram Khan, 'Sabhāpatir abhibhāṣaṇ', Baṅgīya-Musalmān-Sāhitya-Patrikā, 1st yr., 4th no.; Māgh, 1325 (1919).
126. The information is not correct - three dailies by Moslems Nabayug, Dāinik Sebak and Dāinik Mohāmmadī were already being published from Calcutta between the years 1920 and 1922.

being 17 dailies put out in Calcutta, and that of Calcutta's 22 weeklies Mohāmmadī alone was worth-mentioning by Moslems. Whereas though there were 50 monthlies none/was by a Moslem. "To guide this vast community more dailies, weeklies, and monthlies are needed."<sup>127</sup>

In 1920 the editor of Bāṅga Nūr expressed, in his desire for the emergence of a vast Moslem national literature, a new aspect of the question: there could, he concluded, be no national improvement (i.e. for both Hindus and Moslems) until both communities recognised each other's worth. The emergence of a Moslem literature would help Hindus recognise the value of their Moslem brothers.<sup>128</sup> The same theme was continued by Dr. Mohammad Shahidullah in 1929 in Saogāt: "We have often spoken of Moslem literature. Some people may say, 'What fanaticism! how on earth can there be communal discrimination in literature?'..... Literature does not become Moslem simply because the authors are Moslem..... Our literature will draw its inspiration from the Qorān and Hadith, Moslem history and Moslem biographies....Unlike

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127. Editor, 'Bāṅgālār Mochalmān', Choltān, 8th yr., 1st no.; 28th Bāiśākh, 1330 B.S.; 11th May, 1923.

128. Editor, 'Bāṅgālā samayik patre Mosalmāner sthān', Bāṅga Nūr, 1st yr., 3rd no.; Māgh, 1326 B.S. (1920).

temples and mosques Hindu and Moslem literatures are, however, not the monopolies of single communities.... Indeed, Bengali literature will constitute the imperishable meeting-house of Hindus and Moslems of which Hindu and Moslem literature will form its two wings. Admittance will be open to all, but that meeting-house will not be completed till Moslem literature is fully developed."<sup>129</sup>

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129. Dr. Mohammad Shahidullah, M.A.B.L., D.Litt., 'Abhibhāṣaṇ', Saogāt, 6th yr., 10th no.; Bâisākh, 1336 B.S. (1929).

## Chapter V

Education

Since Bengal was under Moslem rule, when the British first came there, it was natural that the British should at first adopt Moslem institutions: they acquired Persian, and upon gaining control of Bengal retained for some considerable time the Moslem system of administration. The assimilation was thus at first all on the British side, as it had been on the Hindu side before them. Gradually, however, to some extent under pressure from Hindus, who were collaborating with them, the British anglicised the administration, education and the cosmopolitan capital of Bengal, Calcutta. Moslems remained largely aloof from this anglicisation. From the abolition of Persian as the official language in 1837, their influence rapidly declined. Whereas previously they had virtually monopolised top, non-British administrative posts, by the 1860s the Hindus, thanks to their assiduous westernisation, had virtually replaced them.

Thus it was that towards the end of the 19th century Moslems experienced great heart-searchings over their failure to accept western education and the consequences ensuing from

that failure. Obviously to survive and prosper as a community a renaissance, similar to that achieved by Hindus, was necessary. The question was, how was it to be attained? How were Moslems, on the one hand, to retain their individuality as a religious community, and, on the other, to achieve an equal degree of advancement with Hindus? The educational system in schools and colleges established by the British had by the 1860s a heavy Hindu-Christian bias. Such education was, orthodox society feared, likely to lead either to conversion to Christianity or to Hinduisation. On the other hand, education in traditional Maktabs and Madrassas<sup>1</sup> was unlikely to result in employment. In the end, sheer economic necessity made the Moslem community accept western education. Nevertheless, during our period interesting attempts were made to develop a peculiarly Moslem national education to university level. This attempt was, however, eventually rendered abortive by a growing awareness of the importance to the Bengalee Moslem community of Western education and the Bengali language itself. The linguistic burden imposed on Bengalee Moslems by this attempt to develop

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1. Maktab - Junior school for Moslem boys and girls, commonly held in a mosque.  
Madrassa - A particular type of school where the Islamic 'sciences' (ulum) are taught.

national Moslem education was increasingly felt to be excessive. Ultimately the wisest path seemed to be to opt merely for English and Bengali.

This chapter will fall into two parts: the first being concerned with the educational system introduced by the British, and the second with the attempts of Moslems to retain and modify their system of "National Education".

## I

### Western Education<sup>2</sup>

#### (i) Education via English and Bengali.

Numerous articles draw attention to the indifference

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2. Summing up the Bengalee Moslem position in regard to Western education (i.e. modern education via English and Bengali) in 1901, the Imperial Gazetteer of India, Bengal (Vol.I, 1909) states: "In proportion to the relative populations, Hindus gained twelve times as many university degrees in 1901 as Muhammadans, and they sent thrice the number of pupils to secondary schools. In the same year only 9 per cent. of Muhammadans of school going age attended Primary schools as compared with 11.9 per cent. among Hindus". - p.160.
- Statistics paint a most deplorable picture of the Bengalee Moslem position in Western education. Though numbering in 1911 24,237,228 and constituting 52.3% of the province's population, the Bengalee Moslem community could between 1901 and 1912 produce only the following examination-successes: in the B.A. examination 342; in the B.Sc. 8; in the I.A. 911; in the ISc. 47; and in the Matriculation 3,685 - M.Azizul Haq, History and Problems of Moslem Education in Bengal, 1917, Appendix H.

of the Moslem community towards Western education.<sup>3</sup> Various attempts were made to analyse the reasons for this indifference and to suggest ways of overcoming it.<sup>4</sup> The first known analysis via the Bengali Moslem press came in Mihir o Sudhākar in 1899. The reasons given are:

- The superstitious attitude of regarding the learning of the official language (English) as anti-religious;
- the neglect and lack of foresight of guardians;
- shortage of money;

3. Attempts to promote English education amongst Moslems were thwarted from the outset by Moslems themselves: between 1826 and 1851, for example, the Calcutta Madrassa managed at the cost of over one lac of rupees to produce only two junior scholars; and Macaulay's famous proposal in favour of English education in 1835 was opposed by a petition from Calcutta Moslems carrying no less than 8,000 signatures. The apparent fear was that the introduction of English was a step towards conversion to Christianity. The boycott-campaign against English, which largely succeeded at least until the 1860s, was conducted by the Ulemā in conjunction with Moslem aristocrats.

4. The efforts in this direction of Nawab Abdul Latif (1828-93), Syed Ameer Ali (1849-1928) and Mr. Abdul Karim (b.1865) may relevantly be cited here together with those of the Mahomedan Literary Society (1863), the National Mahomedan Association (1878) and the Muhammadan Educational Conference (1886). Detailed analyses and specific recommendations were made by the Government of Bengal in 1871-72, the Education Commissions of 1882 and 1884, and the Mahomedan Education Committee in 1914. For Moslem press-campaign favouring English education infra pp. 258-60

- the reluctance and disrespect toward religion displayed by Moslems educated in the official language;
- the animosity of the Hindus;
- lack of Government encouragement;
- Moslem extravagance on ostentatious display;
- disenchantment with hard work;
- the shortage of Moslem officials in Educational institutions; and
- the door to official employment being placed in the hands of Hindus.<sup>5</sup>

Some of these reasons find support in other articles.

(a) The superstitious attitude.

Islām-pracārak in 1902 confirmed this: "Our elders in previous generations did not allow their sons to be educated in English. They felt that once educated in English their sons would lack religious knowledge and indeed become irreligious or infidel."<sup>6</sup>

Again in 1904: "the common belief is that it [English

5. Sri Syed Abdul Gaffar, 'Prerita patra', Mihir of Sudhākar', 8th Pāṣ, 1306 B.S. (1899).  
For Moslem apathy towards, and backwardness in, Western education, see also Report of the Indian Education Commission, 1882, pp.483, 488 & 489; Education Commission: Report by the Bengal Provincial Committee, 1884, p.395 and M.Azizul Haq, opcit, Ch.XI.
6. Ebne Ma'az, 'Musalmān bordiṃ bā Chātrābās', Islām-pracārak, 4th yr., 9th-10th no.; Fālgun-Cāitra, 1308 B.S. (1902).

education] is...intensely inimical to our religion."<sup>7</sup>

And once more in 1906: "In a recent speech in the Moslem Institute in Calcutta Allama Shibli<sup>8</sup> clearly stated that if Moslems were educated in accordance with the present system [as in English schools] then the mosques would soon be deserted."<sup>9</sup>

Again Islām-pracāraḥ in the same year: "The minds of Moslems were dominated by such superstitions as English was a foreign language, the language of infidels, and if one learnt it one would have to go to hell."<sup>10</sup>

And finally Śikhā in 1927: "(A group of guardians) issued edicts banning English education as the education of infidels."<sup>11</sup>

(b) The neglect and lack of foresight of guardians.

This found confirmation  
- in Islām-pracāraḥ in 1902: "They [Moslems] failed to seek out any means of blocking the road to perdition. No plan occurred to their simple minds whereby their sons might

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7. M. Aftabuddin Ahmad, 'Baṅgīya Musalmāner śikṣā', Islām-pracāraḥ, 6th yr., 8th no.; Agrahāyan, 1311 B.S. (1904).
  8. Maolana Shibli Nomani (1857-1914), a distinguished scholar and a poet.
  9. Editor, 'Jātiya o dharma sambād', Islām-pracāraḥ, 8th yr., 1st no.; Bāisākh, 1313 B.S. (1906).
  10. Abdul Haq Choudhury, 'Musalmān sampradāy o tāhār patan', Islām-pracāraḥ, 8th yr., 11th no.; 1313 B.S. (1906).
  11. Anwarul Kadir, 'Bāngālī Musalmāner Sāmājīk galad', Śikhā, 1st yr., Cāitra, 1333 B.S. (1927).

acquire the official language English without losing their religion. Their descendants have had to suffer the consequences of this error of theirs."<sup>12</sup>

- in Islām-pracāraḥ again in 1904: "The present younger generation is like drifting, aimless grass on the river. The cause of this is largely the opposition given to English education. Who can turn the clock back? The present situation would probably not have arisen if we had acted in accordance with prevailing tendencies at the time. We are all lost because of indifference shown to English education and the fierce opposition put up against it."<sup>13</sup>

- in Kohinur in 1904: "There are a group of old-fashioned orthodox Moslems who are opposed to Bengalee Moslems' learning Bengali. They converse in Urdu and correspondent in Persian."<sup>14</sup>

- in Islām-pracāraḥ that same year: "It was probably the British who first introduced mass education in this country. But most regrettably the Moslems from the very first displayed indifference towards it and thereby applied an axe to their own feet. At the beginning of English rule

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12. Ebne Ma'az; op.cit.

13. Aftabuddin Ahmad, 'Baṅgīya Musalmāner śikṣā', Islām-pracāraḥ, 6th yr., 3rd no.; Aṣāḥ, 1311 B.S. (1904).

14. Sheikh Fazlal Karim, 'Dharmahīnatā o samāj-saṁskār', Kohinur, 5th yr., 3rd no.; Aṣāḥ, 1311 B.S. (1904).

the majority of highly-placed officials were Moslems. But since their successors were negligent of English education, they were gradually driven from their own preserves."<sup>15</sup>

- in Śikhā in 1927: "There are a group of guardians who are still opposed to the kind of education that is given in schools and collegēs."<sup>16</sup>

(c) Shortage of money.

This found support in Bāsanā in 1909: "Poor Moslem boys are obliged to help their parents by earning money by manual work right from childhood. [In such circumstances] what time do such children have to attend schools? The number of such Moslem boys is great.... Their first consideration is their daily bread - the Pāthśālā [lower primary school]

15. M.Aftabuddin Ahmad, 'Baṅgīya Musalmāner śikṣā', Islām-pracāraḱ, 6th yr., 8th no.; Agrahāyaṇ, 1311 B.S. (1904).

Describing the Moslem position in regard to civil employment, W.W.Hunter wrote in 1871: "...for some time after the country passed under our care, the Musalmans retained all the functions of Government in their own hands...for the first fifty years of the Company's Rule the Musalmans had the lion's share of state patronage. During its second half century of power the tide turned,.... there is now scarcely a Government office in Calcutta in which a Muhammadan can hope for any post above the rank of porter, messenger, filler of inkpots, and mender of pens." - Indian Musalmans, 1871, pp.165 & 167.

16. Anwarul Kadir, op.cit.

comes second."<sup>17</sup>

It also seemed to find support in Al-Eslām in 1920, where an article complained that "Superficial display has now become one of the chief parts of education. The numbers of Inspectors and administrators and their salaries are gradually increasing....."

"The outward show in syllabuses is now even more astonishing. The excessive number of books required, the changing of them each year, the enlarging of them, and in addition to this the insistence on having, and increasing, the number of note books and exercise books and so forth is flabbergasting."<sup>18</sup>

Beneath this complaint about the expensiveness of western-type education there undoubtedly lay an implicit complaint that the burden on Moslems was both excessive and

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17. Amiruddin Ahmad, 'Musalmān śikṣā samiti', Bāsanā, 2nd Vol., 1st no.; Bāiśākh, 1316 (1909). The "depressed condition of the bulk of Bengali Musalmans" was highlighted by the Education Commission of 1882, when analysing the causes of apparent Moslem indifference to Western education. (*italics mine*) "Poverty" is again cited in 1913 as amongst the "reasons which have retarded the spread of secondary education among the Mahomedans...." - M. Azizul Haq, op.cit. Ch. XI.
18. Manirazzaman Islamabadi, 'Mochalmān nimna śikṣāy unnati bidhāner prastab', Al-Eslām, 6th yr., 6th no.; Aśvin, 1327 B.S. (1920).

unnecessary.<sup>19</sup>

The poverty of some Moslem students was again hinted at in Choltān in 1923, where it was pointed out that "Unless Bengalee Moslem students learn Urdu well, they will in future be deprived of free lodgings and in consequence the door to education for many of them [i.e. poor students] will close."<sup>20</sup>

(d) The reluctance and disrespect towards religion displayed by Moslems educated in the official language (i.e. English).

This found support

- in Islām-pracāra, 1902: "In the North-Western Provinces and in the Punjab, though not in Bengal, many Moslems were converted to Christianity owing to acquiring English education..... Due to it many English educated Moslems have become tinged with serious faults - chief of which are an aversion to practise their religion and a lack of any sense of morality. Many of them are deficient even in religious faith. Their

19. See also 'Memorial from the National Muhammadan Association', quoted in Education Commission - Report by the Bengal Provincial Committee, 1884, p.395.

20. Editor, 'Bāngālī chātrēr jāygir lop', Choltān, 8th yr., 13th no.; 25th Srāban, 1330 B.S.; 10th August, 1923. Urdu-speaking Moslem residents in Calcutta provided free board and lodging as a charity to poor Moslem students from the mofussil. In the interest of communication and good-will, fluency in Urdu was advantageous.

religious outlook approaches atheism."<sup>21</sup>

- in the same journal in 1903: "Moslem youths who become engaged in English education become so completely absorbed in learning this alien language alone that they are reluctant to receive religious instruction from competent religious people, or to read their own national scriptures."<sup>22</sup>

- And once more in 1906: "...some of the irreligious young men who bear the name of Moslems are about to sever the sacred bonds of religion. Their dreams are exactly like those of European atheists and their aim is worldly advancement alone. They do not seem to have any faith in the after-life."<sup>23</sup>

(e) The animosity of the Hindus.

This found support

- in Nabā Nūr in 1903: "This is the Hindu predominance there [Calcutta University] which prevails even in the Faculties."<sup>24</sup> As soon as the responsibility for the

21. Ebne Ma'az, op.cit.

22. See also chapter on Society, pp. 382.

22. Ebne Ma'az, 'Amāder ki karā ucit', Islām-pracāraḳ, 5th yr., 11th-12th no.; Agrahāyan-Pāuṣ, 1310 B.S. (1903).

23. Editor, 'Jātiyā o dharma sambād', Islām-pracāraḳ, 8th yr., 1st no.; Bâisākh, 1313 B.S. (1906).

24. Infra pp. 254-56.

distribution of state scholarships fell into the hands of Hindus talented Moslem pupils were deprived from getting them."<sup>25</sup>

- and in Al-Eslām in 1920: "In class the Hindu teachers and pupils will address Moslems in such abusive terms as Mochlā, Mleccha, Javana, Nere, Māmā and the comments given vent to by the teachers in the course of the class laughingly and with their faces screwed up like owls will almost invariably be tainted with anti-Moslem sentiment."<sup>26</sup>

(f) Lack of government encouragement.

This found confirmation

- in Islām-darśan in 1924: "The Bengal Government spends from its revenue 1 crore 39 lacs of rupees on the spread of education.... From the point of view of their percentage in the total population Moslems are entitled to at least 70 lacs of rupees out of that amount, but actually receive only 31 lacs....."

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25. Editorial comment, Naba Nur, 1st yr., 8th no.; Agrahāyan, 1310 B.S. (1903).

26. M. Idris, 'Kâifiyat', Al-Eslām, 5th yr., 11th no.; Fālgun, 1326 B.S. (1920).

Hindu teachers had long been unsympathetic to Moslem pupils. The Education Commission, 1882, for example singles out "a want of sympathy between Hindu teachers and Musalman pupils" as "among the particular causes" of Moslem educational backwardness. - Report, p.489.

"Moslem students are virtually denied Government scholarships. Of the several lacs of rupees awarded in scholarships of various kinds Moslems received only 10 thousand rupees,.... This year Calcutta University has granted 121 Matriculate scholarships, Moslems have got only one of these worth Rs.15.... What more shameful proof of unjust partiality could there be?"<sup>27</sup>

- And in Māsik Mohāmmadī in 1930: "The Government has so far made no practical provision whatsoever for the rapid educational advance of the Moslem community. On the contrary, in most instances their doings have merely impeded Moslem progress....."

The Government by the establishment of Islamia College provided to keep Moslems deprived of the higher standard of education available in general Colleges."<sup>28</sup>

(g) Moslem extravagance on ostentatious display.

This found support in Islām-pracāraḱ in 1906: "If you desire your own welfare, then resolve to give up extravagance on...food and clothing, stop bankrupting yourselves...on

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27. Mohammad Abdul Hakim, 'Bhārate Hindu Musalmān samasyā', Islām-darśan, 4th yr., 3rd no.; Āśvin, 1331 B.S. (1924).  
 28. Editor, 'Śikṣā o Muchalmān', Māsik Mohāmmadī, 3rd yr., 12th no.; Āśvin, 1337 B.S. (1930).

useless litigations...and instead spend your money on the education of your children."<sup>29</sup>

(h) Disenchantment with hard work.

This found confirmation in Islām-pracāraḥ, 8th yr., 11th no., which stated that as soon as Moslems got their hands on a little money, they looked down on business and trade.<sup>30</sup>

(i) The shortage of Moslem officials in educational institutions.<sup>31</sup>

This found support

- in Naba Nur in 1903: "Calcutta University is virtually a Hindu university."<sup>32</sup>

- and in Islām-darśan in 1924: "Calcutta University is

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29. Mohammad K. Chand, 'Musalmānder bidyā śikṣāy abanātir kāraṇ', Islām-pracāraḥ, 8th yr., 11th no.; 1313 B.S. (1906).

See also chapter on Economics, pp. 292-93

30. Ibid., p. 293

31. Moslem representation in educational institutions and in government or semi-government education-departments was then virtually negligible. Nurullah and Naik, analysing the situation between 1902-21, felt that "absence of Muslims on the staff and the alleged complaint that the interest of Muslim/ were not properly looked after by non-Muslim teachers and managers" were among the basic causes for Moslem dissatisfaction with the state of things in Education - History of Education in India, 1951, pp. 580-83. See also Memorandum by Sir Abdel Karim Guznavi to Hartog Committee, 1928-29, p. III.

32. Editorial Comment, Naba Nur, 1st yr., 8th no.; Agrahāyaṇ, 1310 B.S. (1903).

/students

the main centre of higher education for the whole of Bengal but Moslems are denied entrance there. Hindu graduates become members of the University and of the Senate and Syndicate Committees, but old, tried Moslem graduates are not entitled to do so.<sup>33</sup> The number of Moslem High School teachers, College lecturers and Professors is negligible."<sup>34</sup>

- And in Saogāt, 1928: "At the 9th of August session of the Bengal Legislative Council a bill to reform Calcutta University was introduced by Dr. Pramatha Nath Banerjee.... it makes no provision for Moslems....such representation is indispensable for the success of the University....respectable and dignified bodies like the Sadler Commission,<sup>35</sup> the Post graduate Council of the Calcutta University, and the Dacca Intermediate Board have also pointed out the need for Moslem

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33. "Representation of Muslims is very meagre on the [Calcutta] University... The Senate, the Syndicate, the Secondary Board, the Appointments Board and the Board of Studies have no small share in shaping educational ideals. The absence of Muslims in any of those bodies hampers not a little the growth of Muslim culture" - Guznavi, op.cit., p.V.

34. Mohammad Abdul Hakim, op.cit.

35. Appointed in 1917 'to enquire into the condition and prospects of the University of Calcutta and to consider the question of a constructive policy in relation to the problems which it presented', this Commission was known officially as the Calcutta University Commission, but popularly as the Sadler Commission, after its president, Dr.M.E.Sadler, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Leeds. The Commission's Report, published in 1919, widely influenced the shaping of future university education in India.

representation in the [Calcutta University] Senate."<sup>36</sup>

- And also in Saogāt that same year: "Not a single Moslem has occupied this post [of Vice Chancellor] since Calcutta University was established [1857]<sup>37</sup>... It seems to be inconceivable that any Moslem could occupy the post...thus the other community has established a monopoly to it.. We believe that...Sir Abdur Rahim, Sir Guznavi,<sup>38</sup> Mr.A.K.Fazlul

36. Editor, 'Kalikātā biśvabidyālay saṃskār āin', Saogāt, 6th yr., 2nd no.; Bhādra, 1335 B.S. (1928).
37. Sir A.K.Guznavi stated in 1929, "Since the creation of the Calcutta University...there has not been a single Muslim Vice-Chancellor upto this day. Surely this ought to be a sufficient commentary on how Muslims have been entirely shut out from the executive of the Calcutta University, which is a closed body, impervious to Muslim sympathy far less to Muslim influence, and it is time that this state of things is mended" - Guznavi, op.cit., p.V.
38. Sir Abdel Karim Guznavi, a big land lord in Mymensing, was unti 1930 an important figure in Bengal politics. He was member of the Imperial Legislative Council, and also served as a Minister for Bengal. He was closely associated with Moslem educational reform movements.

Haq,<sup>39</sup> Maolvi Abdul Karim,<sup>40</sup> Mr. A.F. Rahman<sup>41</sup> could occupy the post and discharge its duties with competence. We hope that the Minister for Education will give the matter his consideration."<sup>42</sup>

(j) The door to official employment being placed in the hands of Hindus.<sup>43</sup>

This found support in Pracāraḥ, 1900:

"Moslems of India beware,

... ..

Don't you see that the Hindus

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39. A.K. Fazlul Haq (1873-1962), popularly known as Sere Bāṅlā (meaning 'tiger of Bengal'), was for more than half a century an outstanding political leader in the sub continent. He joined Congress in 1904, once becoming its Secretary, was elected General Secretary of the Bengal Provincial Moslem League in 1913, and represented Indian Moslems in the Round Table Conference in London. He moved the Pakistan Resolution in Moslem League's Lahore conference (1940). He was also the Chief Minister of undivided Bengal, a Central Government Minister in Pakistan and Governor of East Pakistan.
40. Abdul Karim B.A. (b.1865) served as Inspector of Schools, and was a Fellow of Calcutta University. He was also a member of the Asiatic Society, the Secretary of Bāṅlīya Musalmān Sāhitya Samiti in 1915 and its President in 1917-18. He published a number of books, of which the important ones are: Bhāratbarṣe Musalmān rājatyer itibr̥tta (1898) and Muhammādan Education in Bengal (1900).
41. Sir A.F. Rahman (d.1945) began his career as Professor of History in Aligarh in 1921, joined Dacca University that same year and was Provost, Salimullah Muslim Hall till 1927. He also served as the Vice-Chancellor of Dacca University from 1934 to 1936.
42. Editor, 'Kalikātā biśvabidyālayer bhāis cyānselār', Saogāt, 6th yr., 1st no.; Śrābaṇ, 1335 B.S. (1928).
43. See chapter on Hindu-Moslem Relations, pp.149-50.

Have got all the top jobs,  
They are studying the official language with  
great determination."<sup>44</sup>

Efforts were made as early as 1900 to break down this indifference to English education.<sup>45</sup> For example, in that year the ballad quoted above from Pracārak concluded -

"So all of you with might and main study now,  
Give your minds to English, the official language."

The chief objection to English was the religious one. For religious reasons Moslems wished to cling to Arabic. A contributor to Naba Nūr in 1904 stated however, "We shall learn English not merely to acquire jobs but to extend our knowledge and to gain access to science. I request those who favour acquiring and diffusing knowledge through Arabic alone to the exclusion of all other foreign languages to emigrate to Arabia....Islam is not confined to the Arabic language alone."<sup>46</sup>

From 1901 to 1904, however, compromise seemed to be

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44. Khādemol Moslemīn Sri Kazi Golam Mawla, 'Basanta Sahacar', Pracārak, 2nd yr., 9th no.; Āsvin, 1307 B.S. (1900).

45. Supra pp. 243-45.

46. Imdādul Haq, 'Dharma ebaṃ śikṣā', Naba Nūr, 1st yr., 11th no.; Fālgun, 1310 B.S. (1904).

in the air. Islām-pracāarak in 1904 wrote: "Why should we lose our religion through English education?....I believe that the more Moslems go on educating themselves in Arabic and Persian alongside their English education, the more strength of mind they will acquire and the stronger they will become nationally."<sup>47</sup> A similar viewpoint had been put forward two years earlier in Islām-pracāarak: "It does not mean that once we are educated in English we must abandon our national education."<sup>48</sup>

In 1904 Islām-pracāarak rebuked the Maolvis and Mullās (meaning orthodox religious teachers) for not having realised the possibility of such a compromise earlier. "If our missionary Maolvis and Mullas had advised us...to receive English education along with acquiring religious learning instead of declaring war against education via English and Bengali, then probably our society would have been presenting a completely different appearance."<sup>49</sup>

Probably, however, the economic argument in favour of

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47. M.Aftabuddin Ahmad, 'Baṅgīya Musalmāner śikṣā', Islām-pracāarak, 6th yr., 8th no.; Agraḥāyan, 1311 B.S. (1904).
48. Ebne Ma'az, 'Musalmān bordin bā chātrābās', Islām-pracāarak, 4th yr., 9th-10th no.; Fālgun-Cāitra, 1308 B.S. (1902).
49. Aftabuddin Ahmad, 'Baṅgīya Musalmāner śikṣā', Islām-pracāarak, 6th yr., 3rd no.; Aṣāḥ, 1311 B.S. (1904).

English proved strongest in the end. Islām-pracāarak in 1906 wrote: "But being defeated in life's struggle and suffering the pangs of hunger they [the Moslems].... now realise full well what poisonous fruits come of ignorance and superstition. All educated Moslems are acquainted with the teachings of the Prophet.... If knowledge is available even in China then go there and acquire it... Then why should Moslems be indifferent to English language?"<sup>50</sup>

(ii) Hinduised Text Books in schools and colleges.

According to some journals one of the defects of Western education, stemming directly from the earlier Moslem indifference to it, was that the educational system had become Christian- and Hindu- oriented.<sup>51</sup> For example, in 1903 Islām-pracāarak cried, "Who can stem the course of this Western educational system introduced by an alien Christian Government into a land teeming with Hindus?"<sup>52</sup> And the

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50. Abdul Haq Choudhury, op.cit.

51. The Educational Commission, 1882 referred Moslem objections to "the use in Government schools of books whose tone was hostile or scornful towards the Muhammadan religion" - Report, p.483. And in 1900 Abdul Karim pointed out that "Muhammadan boys reading these Bengali books [in schools] imbibe unpalatable ideas with regard to their religion and nationality." See Abdul Karim, Muhammadan Education in Bengal, 1900, pp.44-46.

52. Ebne Ma'az, 'āmāder ki karā ucit', Islām-pracāarak, 5th yr., 11th-12th no.; Agrahāyan-Pāuṣ, 1310 B.S. (1903).

following year elucidated, "those employed to administer our education, being members of different religious communities, compelled us to follow courses consonant with Christianity and Hinduism rather than devising for us courses consonant with Moslem scriptures." Elsewhere the same article lamented, "We were forced to learn parrot-fashion three languages, Bengali, English and Sanskrit, that were devoid of the least trace of Islamic religion."<sup>53</sup>

The difficulty was that in most educational institutions the text books were written by Hindus. In 1891 Islām-pracārak complained, "Being misled by their education they [Moslem students] are becoming completely ignorant of their national religion... English education is... gradually anglicising [their] sensibilities... How many of these boys and young men are acquainted with the life story of..... Hajrat Mohammad?"<sup>54</sup>

Nur-al-Imān in 1900 similarly complained that "There are no particular books included in the Pāthśālā-syllabuses to teach Moslem boys about their religion, etiquette, ethics

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53. Aftabuddin Ahmad, op.cit.

54. Editor, 'Sūcanā', Islām-pracārak, 1st yr., 1st no.; Bhādra, 1298 B.S. (1891).

and customs...[they] are instructed by the educated Hinduised Moslems, who have been substituted for Hindu teachers...the texts...contain Hindu mythological stories.... [they are] exposed to the maligning of Moslems...the reviling of Islamic codes of conduct, and the smearing of the Moslem race with such names as Mleccha and Yavana."55

In 1909 Bāsanā made the same complaint and added, "It is the duty of every Moslem to strive to get incorporated in our school curriculum the basic essentials published in simple Bengal about Moslem historical events, accounts of our heroes and heroines, tales about our saints and dervishes, histories of the prophets, narratives about our religious men and women, the lives of rulers and kings and stories about the virtues of chaste women (sati ramanī), the essence of the Islamic religion, the substance of Hādith and religious documents (dalil), the utility of prayer and fast and accounts of Moslem festivals...."56

Mohammad Shahidullah in 1916 made a similar complaint

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55. Editor, 'Hemāyet Eslām', Nur-al-imān, 1st yr., 2nd no.; Śrāban, 1307 B.S. (1900).  
See also chapters on Hindu-Moslem Relations, p.154, and Literature, pp.197-202
56. Mohammad Fakiruddin Sarkar, 'Chātra jībane nāitik śikṣā', Bāsanā, 2nd vol., 2nd no.; Jyāâiṣṭha, 1316 B.S. (1909).

and then asked, "What can be more shameful than that even in Maktabs and Moslem Girls schools our children have to read books by Hindus? Are we so illiterate that we cannot write books for them?" Commenting on school history books, he complained "these devote four pages to the life of Buddha and a mere half page to the life of Mohammad, yet not a single pupil in the class will be Buddhist, whereas half of them will be Moslems.... School history text books generally conceal anything derogatory to the Hindu kings, yet loudly publicise Moslem defects whilst remaining virtually silent about their virtues. The consequence is that the study of Indian history leads children to conclude that the Moslems are a useless, untrustworthy, oppressive and cruel people which it would be in the world's interests to become extinct."<sup>57</sup> A similar point is again made in Al-Eslām in 1920.<sup>58</sup> But probably the worst offence committed by a Hindu was that of Sri Bholā Nath Sen in writing his

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57. Mohammad Shahidullah M.A., B.L., 'Amāder (Sāhityik) daridrātā', Al-Eslām, 2nd yr., 2nd no.; Jyāiṣṭha, 1323 B.S. (1916).

58. "The most of the text books in class will have been based on fantastic yarns from Rāmāyana and Mahābhārata and quoted from writings of great anti-Moslem authors like Bankim" - M. Idris, op.cit.

Prācīn kāhinī containing "an imaginary picture of the Prophet of the world, Hajrat Mohammad, and Hajrat Jibrāil [Gabriel]." Sariyate Eslām warned the Education authority to withdraw this book. "Otherwise if...fresh unrest and dissatisfaction flares up<sup>59</sup>.....the responsibility for it will rest solely with the Education authority and the Government."<sup>60</sup>

Discontent with western, Hindu-oriented education resulted in two demands: one, a demand for reform, two, a demand for some other means of protecting the national religion of the Moslems.<sup>61</sup>

(iii) Educational Reforms.<sup>62</sup>

The reforms mentioned are in text books, in greater representation in Calcutta University, enlarged aid for Moslem education and also changes in the educational system

59. Reference may in this connection be made to the troubles, which occurred over Rāngilā Rasul - affair. See chapter on Hindu-Moslem Relations, p.181 f.n.86
60. Editor, 'Bibidha prasānga', Sariyate Eslām, 6th yr., 2nd no.; Fālgun, 1337 B.S. (1931).
61. According to the Quinquennial Review of the Progress of Education in India, 1907-12, "all that the [Bengali] Muhammadan wishes is that words of Persian origin, when in common use, be not consciously excluded from the school books, or religious expressions emphasised which may hurt his religious susceptibilities" - Quoted by Nurullah and Naik, op.cit., p.586.
62. Regarding Moslem demands for Educational Reform, see also M.Azizul Haq, op.cit., Appendix L; Guznavi, op.cit., p.IX.

itself. Moslem Bhārat in 1921 wanted Primary Education via Bengali only; emphasis on physical training and mental adriotness; and Secondary Education rendered self-complete i.e. sufficient to lead to employment rather than being a mere step towards higher education.<sup>63</sup> Sāmyabādī in 1924 wished to break down the feeling that "it is degrading for educated people to do manual work." It advocated technical education: instruction in skilled trades such as advanced agriculture, weaving, carpentry, tailoring and various trades and crafts.<sup>64</sup> In 1928 a Primary Education bill was introduced by the Education Minister Nawab Mosharraf Hossain. It failed to mention "Whether Primary education in the rural areas [was] to be free and compulsory."<sup>65</sup> Saogāt commented, "unless it is free and compulsory it will have no real result."<sup>66</sup>

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63. Tariqul Alam B.A., B.L., 'Amāder śikṣā samasyā', Moslam Bhārat, 1st yr., 2nd vol., 5th no.; Fālgun, 1327 B.S. (1921).
64. Mohammad Wajed Ali, 'Lekhāpāṭā śikṣār uddeśya', Sāmyabādī, 2nd yr., 6th no.; Kārtik, 1331 B.S. (1924).
65. Editor, 'Prāthamik śikṣā bil', Moṃājjin, 1st yr., 3rd no.; Kārtik, 1335 B.S. (1928).
66. Editor, 'Prāthamik śikṣā bil', Saogāt, 6th yr., 2nd no.; Bhādra, 1335 B.S. (1928).
- The draft of the Rural Primary Education Bill made in 1929, however, "had as its ultimate object the provision of free compulsory education... The measure was attacked in Hindu bhadralok press as communalist-inspired. It was evident that if it were passed the [Hindu] bhadralok would be forced to support a system that would mainly benefit the peasantry" - J.H. Broomfield, Elite Conflict in a Plural Society, 1968, p.285.

The feeling in general was that Hindu-oriented western education, as at present instituted, militated against "patriotism",<sup>67</sup> inculcated "disrespect and intense dislike towards their [Moslems'] own nation, instead of...pride.... and national prestige";<sup>68</sup> for, as Mohammad Shahidullah pointed out, "These books [Text books by Hindus] destroy their [Moslem students'] sense of nationhood."<sup>69</sup> Therefore in order to preserve the Moslem sense of nationality another form of education was needed.<sup>70</sup>

## II

### "National Education"

#### Introductory note.

The presentation of the material in this section is difficult. Various cross-currents of opinion appear in the Press. The main lines of development are, however, clear: all thinking people in the Moslem community desired to goad their more lethargic co-religionists into activity

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67. Editor, 'Hemāyet Eslām', Nur-al-imān, 1st yr., 2nd no.; Srāban, 1307 B.S. (1900).

68. Ismail Hossain Siraji, 'Itihās carcār ābšyakatā', Al-Eslām, 2nd yr., 5th no.; Bhādra, 1323 B.S. (1916).

69. Mohammad Shahidullah, op.cit.

70. "The present educational system....cannot arouse our lost nationalism" - Shekh Fazlal Karim, 'Dharmahinatā o samāj samskār', Kohinur, 5th yr., 3rd no.; Āṣārh, 1311 B.S. (1904).

in order to diffuse education throughout their community and thus stimulate unity and a sense of nationhood. The differences lay in approach. Some favoured Urdu, Arabic and Persian, some Bengali and English; some stressed Moslem religion and culture to the exclusion of all else, others desired general education plus sufficient Islamic background-culture to enable Moslems to identify themselves as such. But gradually towards the 1930's disenchantment with separatist efforts set in: the majority of intellectuals seemed by then to favour integration with the western-type system (though presumably with sufficient modification to retain their individuality); there are, however, indications that for the ordinary god-fearing masses Maktabs and Madrāssās still retained their fascination<sup>71</sup> at the expense of free Primary schools which were said in some areas to be closing down.

(i) The need for Arabic, Persian and Urdu.

Though Moslems were by 1901 to some extent aware that

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71. The Maktab-Madrassa education alone was presumably catering to the majority of Moslem students even until the end of 1920s - Guznavi, op.cit., pp.III-IV.

their decline as a nation was linked with their clinging to Persian, nevertheless Persian, Arabic and Urdu remained indispensable for some of them.<sup>72</sup> For example, Islām-pracāarak early in 1902 seemed on the one hand to deprecate the fact that many Moslems continued to educate their sons in Arabic and Persian -

"The decline of the Moslem nation dates from the time when English replaced Persian as the official language of this country.<sup>73</sup> The above kind of thinking rendered aristocratic Moslems averse to educating their sons in English. Many of them continued to educate them in Arabic and Persian as before" -, yet, nevertheless, stated in the same article -

"unfortunately many people are abandoning three [Arabic,

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72. Indeed, members of the aristocracy, oriental scholars and orthodox Mullās, together with some of the newly-arisen upper-middle classes were still advocating the cultivation of Arabic, Persian and Urdu. Thus the Secretary of the Mahomedan Literary Society wrote on 25th August, 1907, to the Director of Public Instruction in Bengal, "in any scheme which may eventually be adopted due regard should be paid for the encouragement of Urdu, Persian and Arabic in the indigenous Maktabs and lower grade Madrassas" - Sufia Ahmed, Some Aspects of the History of the Muslim Community in Bengal, 1884-1912, London University unpublished Ph.D. thesis, 1960, p. 66.
73. The Act XXIX of 1837 abolished the use of Persian as the language of both Upper and Lower courts: its place was taken by English and the Vernaculars.

Persian and Urdu] of our five languages and educating their children only in Bengali and English before allowing them to go out into the world."<sup>74</sup>

Criticising guardians who educated their children only in English and Bengali, Islām-pracāarak pointed out that "Whereas Hindus have to learn two or three languages, Bengalee Moslems have of necessity to master five", arguing that for a Hindu child Sanskrit, English and Bengali were sufficient, whereas for a Bengalee Moslem Arabic was needed so as "to read the Qorān correctly", Persian for 'national culture', 'etiquette', 'national poetry and history', "Urdu to converse with urban, aristocratic Moslems" and finally English, 'the official language'.<sup>75</sup>

In 1900, however, Nur-al-Imān had pointed out the difficulty of learning Arabic and Persian firstly because the syllabary was confusing and secondly because "pupils have to read books printed by cheap lithographs on bad paper.

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74. Ebne Ma'az, 'Musalmān bordiṃ bā chātrābās', Islām-pracāarak, 4th yr., 9th-10th no.; Fālgun-Cāitra, 1308 B.S. (1902).

75. Ebne Ma'az, ibid.  
The language problem for Bengalee Moslems was not only educational, but also religious and cultural; and, even more important, political. It was a problem concerning their very identity and future, the significant side-issues being: what was the mother-tongue of the Bengalee Moslems?; what ought their lingua franca to be; and what should be their 'national' or 'state language'? See also chapter on Language.

Not only is the paper dirty, but the cheap lithograph does not print with complete legibility."<sup>76</sup> And by 1919 Al-Eslām had realised what a heavy linguistic burden was being placed upon Moslem students "in the form of English, Bengali, Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, Urdu etc." Students were, therefore, "failing to acquire full proficiency in any language at all." "It is better to be proficient in one language than to possess a smattering of four or five.... There is no particular necessity for Persian or Urdu." Al-Eslām, therefore, concluded that Bengali, Arabic and English would suffice.<sup>77</sup>

Reporting on the position of Arabic, Choltān in November, 1923, stated, "Arabic education does not seem to have made any particular progress in the last fifty years." In West and Central Bengal it was "virtually neglected". "Pride of place in regard to the cultivation of Arabic in East Bengal goes to Chittagong division, and within that division to the district of Chittagong where there are at present seven or eight thousand Ulemā."<sup>78</sup>

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76. Editor, 'Hemāyet Eslām', op.cit.

77. Sheikh Abdul Gafur Jalāli, 'Sikṣā bistārer upāy', Al-Eslām, 5th yr., 3rd no.; Aṣāḥ, 1326 B.S. (1919).

78. Editor, 'Bangīya Mochalmān samāj', Choltān, 8th yr., 24th no.; 16th Kārtik, 1330 B.S.; 2nd November, 1923.

Possibly one of the causes of the decline of Arabic was the fact that, as Al-Eslām reported in 1919, as a result of reforms the dominance of Arabic in some Government Madrassas had much diminished. "In those institutions every subject with the exception of Arabic is taught through the medium of English". Consequently the journal commented, "It does not seem as if the poor Arabic language will be able to do much against pompous English." Al-Eslām then attacked the 'slavish and imitative' attitude of students in these Madrassas, and concluded, "in slavishness of outlook they exceed everyone."<sup>79</sup>

The two main causes of the decline of Arabic, however, were probably the medium through which it was generally taught, namely Urdu, and the advocacy of Bengali.

(ii) Advocacy of Bengali.<sup>80</sup>

In 1900 Pracārak stressed the need for "grammars and dictionaries of the Arabic and Persian languages written in Bengali", indicating that these languages needed to be taught "in unmixed Bengali".<sup>81</sup>

79. Mohammad Abdul Malek Khan, 'Ekṭi nibedan', Al-Eslām, 5th yr., 7th no.; Kārtik, 1326 B.S. (1919).

80. Notably, the movement demanding 'Bengali for Bengal Moslems', which started gaining strength around 1900, and by 1930 had reached its height.

For details, see chapter on Language, pp. 333-42.

81. Editor, 'Ṭāṅgāil bhraman', Pracārak, 2nd yr., 10th no.; Kārtik, 1307 B.S. (1900).

Al-Eslām in 1917 again alluded to the inability of "our venerable Maolvis" to speak, "let alone write, one or two words in Bengali..... If they do ever happen to say a couple of words in fluent Bengali then they do not feel.... at ease unless they add 'I mean, I mean', and then translate one or two unnecessary words into Urdu."<sup>82</sup> Pursuing the same theme in 1919 Baṅgīya-Musalmān-Sāhitya-Patrikā stated, "Every nation...acquires education via its mother tongue. Yet, above the Madrassas in this country is written in large letters, 'Entrance forbidden to the Mother tongue'". It then censured the reformed Madrassas under Dacca University (1920-21), and the Chittagong (1874) and Dacca (1874) Madrassas for teaching and examining Arabic via Urdu, "instead of....Urdu or Persian, it [the medium of instruction] should be Bengali."<sup>83</sup> In 1926 Saogāt expressed great satisfaction that "Arrangements will shortly be made to teach in the Calcutta Madrassa [1780] through the medium of Bengali..... At present Persian and Arabic are taught there only via Urdu, whereas the majority of students are Bengalee."<sup>84</sup>

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82. Mohammad Wajed Ali, 'Sāhitya prasāṅga', Al-Eslām, 2nd yr., 10th no.; Māgh, 1323 (1917).

83. Mozaffar Ahmad, 'Baṅga deśe Mādrāsār śikṣā', Baṅgīya-Musalmān-Sāhitya-Patrikā, 2nd yr., 3rd no.; Kārtik, 1326 B.S. (1919).

84. Editor, 'Bibidha prasāṅga', Saogāt, 4th yr., 1st no.; Aṣāḥ, 1333 B.S. (1926).

(iii) Arabic University.

The Hindu-Orientedness and Hindu predominance in the western educational system left, Naba Nur claimed in 1903, to Moslems two alternatives: either, the western system would have to be modified, so as to drive out from syllabuses the pro-Hindu, anti-Moslem content;<sup>85</sup> or, Moslems would "have no other option but to make their educational arrangements completely separate from those of the Hindus".<sup>86</sup> It was from thinking such as this that the demand for a separate Arabic University stemmed. In 1919 Al-Eslām saw the dissemination of "effective national higher education" as possible only through "a national Arabic University". All subjects "taught in the advanced universities of the developed nations" plus "Islamic monotheism, socialism, civilisation, politics and religion.... the Qorān, Hādith, Fiqh (Moslem Jurisprudence), Aqāid (beliefs) and national histories" were to be taught "through the medium of Arabic". Nevertheless, the media of "Urdu, English and Bengali" were also to be utilised.<sup>87</sup> Al-Eslām in 1920

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85. Supra pp. 260-64.

86. Editorial comment, Naba Nur, 1st yr., 8th no.; Agrahāyan, 1310 B.S. (1903).

87. Mohammad Abdul Malek Khan, op.cit.

saw the purpose of an Arabic University as "to create worthwhile human beings...people of character with religious faith, a devotion to their country, desirous of the welfare of their community and dedicated to their own nation" i.e. "missionaries of a modern type who would establish the ascendancy of Islam throughout the world,"<sup>88</sup> the point being that such people would operate as a body not as selfish individualists out for personal gain.

In 1924 Choltān pointed out that national universities had been established in Aligarh and Lucknow, and national colleges in Lahore and Karachi,<sup>89</sup> and deplored the fact that Bengalee Moslems had failed to do anything comparable.<sup>90</sup> In 1924 Islām-darśan was jubilant over the foundation of Islamia College, which it regarded as "the foundation of National Education for the huge Moslem population of Bengal."<sup>91</sup> By 1929 the Arabic University had still not materialised, though as Sāptāhik Saogāt indicated, some people still

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88. Manirazzaman Islamabadi, 'Arabī biśvabidyālay', Al-Eslām, 6th yr., 3rd no.; Aṣāḥ, 1327 B.S. (1920).

89. Choltān is presumably here referring to the upgrading to university status of Aligarh M.A.O. College in 1920, and to the founding of Nadwāt-ul-Ulemā (1894) in Lucknow, of Islamia College (1892) in Lahore and of Sind Mādrāssāt-ul-Islām (1885) in Karachi.

90. Editor, 'Arabī biśvabidyālay', Choltān, 8th yr., 38th no.; 25th Māgh, 1330 B.S.; 8th February, 1924.

91. Editor, 'Kalikātā Islāmiyā kalej', Islām-darśan, 4th yr., 5th no.; Agrahāyaṇ, 1331 B.S. (1924).

believed it to be a solution of "all our problems". Others were intent on deposing the "heathen language Bengali" and enthroning Urdu, but Sāptāhik Saogāt declared, "it is impossible to foresake our mother tongue, Bengali,<sup>92</sup> and English; and furthermore, if boys of between 5 and 7 years of age are to be forced to learn Arabic and Urdu then their brains will be hadled right from childhood."<sup>93</sup>

By 1930 Moslem separatism in education was regarded by Māsik Mohāmmadī as: one, a Government plot; and two, a failure. It saw the establishment of Islamia College by the Government as a trick "to keep Moslems deprived of the higher standard of education available in general colleges" and secondly, it stated that "Moslem students cannot be kept free from alien influences and the dangēr of losing their religion merely by labels like 'Moslem' or 'Islamic'."<sup>94</sup>

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92. For identical views on Bengali as expressed by earlier Moslem journals, see chapter on Language, pp. 333-42.
93. Editor, 'Musalmāner śikṣā samasyā', Sāptāhik Saogāt, 1st yr., 36th no.; 11th Māgh, 1335 B.S. (1929).
94. Editor, 'Śikṣā o Muchalmān', Māsik Mohāmmadī, 3rd yr., 12th no.; Āśvin, 1337 B.S. (1930).  
Though rational, when considered from a secular stand point, Māsik Mohāmmadī's views were unlikely to find favour in Moslem society at that time; for by then Hindu-Moslem relations had declined to their lowest ebb, and politically Moslems were then pursuing their own separate line. For the same reasons support for Māsik Mohāmmadī was unlikely to be forthcoming from all but a few contemporary Moslem journals.

(iv) Maktabs and Mādrāsās.<sup>95</sup>

Maktabs and Mādrāsās were said to have kept alive the Moslem 'national language' and 'national education'. Writing in 1900 Nur-al-imān said, "it is by depending upon the feeble blood circulation of this educational system that the Moslem community has until now somehow managed to survive almost at its last breath moribund and helpless in the jungles of Bengal."<sup>96</sup>

Actually two types of education were available to Moslem society: one, "that of the Government Mādrāsās, Schools and Colleges, and the other, our national education, or the education imparted in non-Government Arabic, Persian and Urdu Mādrāsās." Al-Eslām in 1920 deemed "both types of education to be deficient". Graduates from Government Arabic Mādrāsās were ignorant of history and geography and unable to discuss "the rise and decline of their own nation and country". On the other hand, those from non-

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95. These were the two types of peculiarly Moslem institutions, which had for so long been responsible for the dissemination of education amongst Moslems in Bengal. Their curricula aimed to encourage the study of Arabic, Persian and Urdu language and literature, and Moslem theology, in accordance with the traditional Islamic system of education.

For Maktab-Madrassa education in Bengal, see Abdul Karim, op.cit., chapters VI & IX; M. Azizul Haq, op.cit.; and Sufia Ahmed, op.cit., chapter I.

96. Editor, 'Hemayet Eslām', op.cit.

Government Madrāssās, though to some extent instructed in Hādith and Tafsīr (commentaries on the Qorān), were unable to disseminate their religion adequately because of their ignorance of "science, philosophy, chemistry, geography, astronomy, the comparative study of various religious texts, ethnology and the history of ancient and modern nations."<sup>97</sup>

According to Al-Eslām the same year, boys educated in the old-type Madrāssās and Maktabs contiguous to Mosques were competent merely to "write a petition and a letter, to read puthis, learn catechisms, to read the Qorān and to say their prayers."<sup>98</sup>

On the other hand, according to Choltān in 1923, the "New-scheme junior Madrāssās....are unfit to be called schools [i.e. Western-type schools] and I cannot call them Arabic Madrāssās either. They are a weird kind of hotch potch which imparts no kind of education properly."<sup>99</sup>

This dissatisfaction with Maktabs and Madrāssās, both Government and private, led to demands for further reforms.

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97. Manirazzaman Islamabadi, op.cit.

98. Manirazzaman Islamabadi, 'Mochalmān nimna śikṣāy unnati bidhāner prastab', Al-Eslām, 6th yr., 6th no.; Āśvin, 1327 B.S. (1920).

99. Editor, 'Baṅgīya Mochalmān samāj', Choltān, 8th yr., 24th no.; 16th Kārtik, 1330 B.S., 2nd November, 1923. This 'hotch potch' in the new Madrassa education was presumably due to the system recommended in the Reformed Madrassa Scheme.

In 1927 Sikhā opposed the teaching of Arabic, Persian and Urdu at the primary level and suggested that Madrassas and Makhtabs of all types be abolished and western education adopted. "The Hindus do not possess special institutions for Sanskrit, yet are they failing to learn Sanskrit on that account? Why can we not manage without Madrassas?"<sup>100</sup>

Madrassas were cheap and Moslem society was poor, but "no education at all is preferable to a bad education in our Madrassas. Because if you make no attempt to acquire education, you do not dissipate national energies."<sup>101</sup>

Māsik Mohāmmadī in 1928 analysed why Moslem missionaries were ineffective. Government Arabic Madrassas excluded the Qorān and Hādith and were "at first founded with the sole object of creating clerks".<sup>102</sup> Ulemā, who graduated from these institutions were "most deplorably deprived of the ethical, practical and spiritual thinking which derives from a study of the Qorān and Hādith, and they had been very carefully protected from contact with modern education,

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100. Cf. Saogāt's views in 1929, infra pp. 280-83.

101. Momtazuddin Ahmad, 'Śikṣā samasyā', Śikhā, 1st yr., Cāitra, 1333 B.S. (1927).

102. Infra pp. 279-80.

civilisation and thinking. In consequence, the religion they propounded brought them day by day into open conflict with modern science."<sup>103</sup> Māsik Mohāmmadī two months earlier deplored the standard of education in Maktab primary schools - "The teachers are probably the Imām [the leader of Congregational prayers] of the local mosque, or the Mullā of that locality." They merely "memorised the reading of the Qorān and one or two catechisms. Their pupils cannot expect much else..."<sup>104</sup>

In 1928 Saogāt indicated that the Calcutta Madrassa,<sup>105</sup> established by the East India Company, was intended to train

103. Editor, 'Tāratamyer kāraṇ ki?' Māsik Mohāmmadī, 1st yr., 4th no.; Māgh, 1334 B.S. (1928).

104. Anwar Hossain, 'Bāmlār Mochalmān o prāthamik śikṣā', Māsik Mohāmmadī, 1st yr., 2nd no.; Agrahāyaṇ, 1334 B.S. (1927).

An almost identical observation was made nearly 25 years earlier by the Secretary, Muhammadan Defence Association, Calcutta. In a communication (April 27, 1903) to the Government of Bengal he commented, "The Koran schools [i.e. the Maktab] teach nothing but Arabic spelling and recitation of verses of the Koran. These Koran schools are of no educational value" - Sufia Ahmed, op.cit., p.42.

105. Calcutta Madrassa, founded in 1780 by Warren Hastings, was the first educational institution for the instruction of Moslem boys founded under British patronage. It has since then been a very important seat of Perso-Arabic studies in India. The Madrassa was established with the express purpose of promoting Moslem law "to qualify the Mohammadans of Bengal for the Public Service, chiefly in the court of justice."

See also S.C.Saniai, 'History of the Calcutta Madrassa', Bengal Past and Present, January-June, 1914.

people "to administer the Law.... Since Fiqh and Mantiq [Moslem Jurisprudence and Logic] were especially needed for this purpose the course of study there was based [on these]." The same course was introduced in Madrassas established in Hooghly (1836), Dacca and Chittagong, i.e. "the Hādith and Qorān found no place there". Saogāt apparently wished these texts to be introduced into the Madrassa-syllabuses. It regretted that despite the establishment of Aligarh University, Dacca University and Islamia College, the increase in Mahomedan Inspectors of schools, the creation of a post of Assistant Director of Mahomedan education, the annual Educational conferences, the Sadler Commission, the Hartog Committee (1928-29), and educational committees up and down the country, composed of "gentlement highly educated and conversant with Mill and Bentham", no one had made any noteworthy attempt to reform the educational system in Madrāssās.<sup>106</sup>

Saogāt five months later took a contrary view, however. It suggested that old-type Maktabs and Madrāssās be abolished; new-scheme Madrāssās be converted into schools; religious instruction be given via Bengali rather than Arabic; and

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106. Ahsanullah, 'Mollāder prabhāb o śikṣita samāj', Saogāt, 6th yr., 3rd no.; Āśvin, 1335 B.S. (1928).

that "nothing else should be taught [in these institutions] except the mother tongue, mathematics, history and geography and in the higher forms English", though a specific number of institutions ought to be retained "for the training of specialists in scriptures."<sup>107</sup>

Saogāt in 1929 regarded the 1927-28 Report of the Department of Public Instruction for the Government of Bengal as disappointing, as far as the Moslem community was concerned. The Moslem attraction to education was "being misdirected. The number of persons in the Moslem community seeking education is considerable, it is only the number at School and College level that is slight... The number in the Khārejī Maktabs and Madrassas<sup>108</sup> is far greater.... We must concentrate our energies in one single direction.... We must abolish Madrassa education.<sup>109</sup> The Department of Public Instruction has also hinted at this."<sup>110</sup>

The following year Saogāt published an Address by Mr. S.Wajed Ali (1890-1951), a Cambridge graduate, who opposed

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107. Editor, 'Musalmānder śikṣā samasyā', Saogāt, 6th yr., 8th no.; Fālgun, 1335 B.S. (1929).

108. These are special institutions outside the jurisdiction of both the Old Scheme and the Reformed Scheme Madrassas. They normally follow a traditional Moslem curriculum.

109. Cf. Śikhā's views in 1927, Supra p.276.

110. Editor, 'Śikṣākṣetre Musalmān', Saogāt, 6th yr., 12th no.; Asāṅh, 1336 B.S. (1929).

Arabic and Urdu in junior Mādrāssās; suggested that Moslem Primaries teach Bengali only; and that the Secondaries teach English; alleged that Maktab and Mādrāssā education impeded students entering High Schools; and claimed that graduates from Senior Mādrāssās were unemployable - "it is impossible for them to earn a living. They would have been able to make a living as labourers or factory workers, but their Madrassa-education has closed these avenues to them. Yet, unlike High School pupils, they are unfitted...(for) Law, Medicine or Commerce."<sup>111</sup> An M.A.B.L. writing in Saogāt that same year claimed that the "infatuation [of Moslems] with Arabic, Persian and Urdu and Madrassas and Maktabs" was causing "indescribable harm". He ridiculed a proposal that New-scheme Madrassas be turned into Old-Scheme Madrassas based on the allegation that boys in New-scheme Madrassas "were unable to lead funeral prayers", from which, he alleged, one might suppose that the whole of Moslem Bengal was either dead or moribund, and all that now remained to be done was for the Maolvī Shāhibs

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111. S.Wajed Ali B.A. (Cantab.), 'Abhibhāsan', Saogāt, 7th yr., 6th no.; Māgh, 1336 B.S. (1930).

"to bury us by kindly reciting the funeral prayers".

To disseminate religion, Bengali translations of the scriptures were required; and Arabic and Persian could be taught in schools and colleges "as classics". There was no need for Madrassas. Indeed, it was the Madrassas alone which were causing Moslems to fall behind their Hindu neighbours.<sup>112</sup>

(v) Associations and Conferences.

Throughout our period associations and conferences were active stimulating the promotion of Moslem Education, the founding of Libraries and Reading rooms, Hostels and other institutions and Funds for helping poor Moslem students with their studies. In 1903 Islām-pracārah reported the foundation of one such society, Mosalmān Śikṣā Sabhā (estd. 1899), in Chittagong and also the preparation for, and holding of, the session of the Provincial Education Conference in Rajshahi district. On the 15th of February 1903 at a meeting of the Calcutta Mahomedan Union it was resolved to set up a Moslem Śikṣā Samiti. Its aims

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112. Khan Bahadur Nasiruddin Ahmad M.A.B.L., 'Islām o Musalmān', Saogāt, 7th yr., 8th no.; Cāitra, 1336 B.S. (1930).

included the propagation of Islam, Female education, Commercial education, institutions for Arts and Crafts, a well-equipped Residential College to teach Arabic, Persian, Urdu, English and Bengali; a translation department to translate into Bengali first-rate books from Arabic, Persian and English; "particularly beneficial to Bengalee Moslems"; and the republication of valuable old Arabic and Persian classics to enrich Moslem literature and enhance the prestige of the Moslem community.<sup>113</sup>

In 1904 Islām-pracāarak reported on the session of the Bengal Provincial Education Conference (Baṅgīya Prādesik Śikṣā Samiti) in Rajshahi, which had resolved to set up District Funds, to found local schools and assist poor students; to promote Industrial and Agricultural training; to institute religious instruction for Moslem pupils; to cultivate physical training and health; campaign for Female education; encourage with prizes and subventions the production of suitable Moslem Text books and to get them incorporated in syllabuses by the Text Book Committee and to prepare a draft scheme of reforms for Maktabs and

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113. S.W.Hossain, 'Baṅgīya prādesik Musalmān Śikṣā Samiti', Islām-pracāarak, 5th yr., 9th-10th & 11th-12th nos.; Aśvin-Kārtik & Agrahāyan-Pāuṣ, 1310 B.S. (1903).

Madrassas for submission to the Department of Public Instruction.<sup>114</sup> In 1907 Islām-pracāarak reported on a meeting of the Musalmān Śikṣā Samiti held at Barisal. It was attended by many distinguished people including Mr. Jack, the District Judge, the Magistrate and Settlement officer, the magnanimous Mr. Beatson Bell, the Director of Land Acquisition and Agriculture department, Government of East Bengal and Assam, numerous local Hindu gentlemen and leading zemindars, landed gentlemen and almost all the Moslem officers in the Department of Public Instruction, as well as officers and clerks from the town, teachers and students, Ulemā and members of the general public.<sup>115</sup>

(vi) Hostels.<sup>116</sup>

In 1902 Islām-pracāarak reported on the founding of

114. 'Baṅgīya prādesik Musalmān Śikṣā Samiti', Islām-pracāarak, 6th yr., 1st-2nd no.; Bâisâkh-Jyââiṣṭha, 1311 B.S. (1904).

115. Reporter, 'Bākargañj jelār Musalmān Śikṣā Samiti', Islām-pracāarak, 8th yr., 3rd no.

116. It may be pointed out in this connection that one of the chief obstacles to Moslem education was shortage of suitable accommodation. This shortage grew acute in direct proportion to the increase in Moslem students seeking to acquire modern education. According to the survey made in 1914, out of a total 66,5,850 Moslem students in mofussil schools only 3089 could manage to find hostel accommodation. The situation in Calcutta was even worse.

- See M. Azizul Haq, Bānlā deśe Muslim śikṣār itihās ebaṃ sāmasyā (tr. Mustafa Nurul Islam), 1969, pp.47, 53, 83-84 and Appendix Jha; and Sufia Ahmed, op.cit., pp.98-103.

various Moslem students' hostels throughout Bengal - the Bell Islamia Boarding in Barisal, the Islamia Boarding in Chittagong and one such in Rajshahi, and efforts to set up some in Kustia, Nadiya, Rajbari, Faridpur and Naogaon. It concluded with a warning that "if it is assumed that the true purpose of a hostel is fulfilled merely by providing accommodation for students there is no point in having any."<sup>117</sup>

(vii) Schools for Bakerganj.

In 1907 Islām-pracārak deplored the lack of schools in the Moslem majority district of Bakerganj (Barisal) ending with an exhortation that "we must arrange to set up Pāthśālas, Maktabs, Mādrāsās and schools on a large scale throughout the whole district."<sup>118</sup>

(viii) Concession for Prayers.

Rejoicing over the decision of the Department of Public Instruction in the Punjab to grant half an hour's recess each Friday so that Moslem teachers and students could attend congregational prayers (Jumā), Islām-pracārak

117. Ebne Ma'az, op.cit.

118. Reporter, 'Bākargañj jelār Musalmān śikṣā samiti', op.cit.

in 1904 expressed the hope that Moslems would press for a similar concession in Bengal.<sup>119</sup>

(ix) Female education.

In 1903 Mihir o Sudhākar expressed surprise that according to the 1901 census 400 Moslem women knew English. "Since it is possible for the teaching of English to penetrate our zenānās, what objection is there to setting up schools for the instruction of our girls?" It then suggested that English be taught in Girls' Madrasahs.<sup>120</sup>

In 1919, however, Al-Eslām suggested that Moslem women needed "a type of education suited to Moslem society". It was impossible for Moslem girls" to attend education institutions till well beyond maturity, travelling by carriage and dressed in tight-fitting chemises and blouses....the reading of trashy dramas and novels, the writing of graphic love letters, attending the theatre and enhancing physical beauty with colourful garments and cosmetics have become part of [Western type] education. That kind of education perverts taste, undermines religious faith and gives rise to bad behaviour."<sup>121</sup> The course suggested would cover six

119. Editor, 'Jātiya o dharma sambād', Islām-pracārak, 6th yr., 1st-2nd no.; Bâisākh-Jyāiṣṭha, 1311 B.S. (1904).

120. 'Musalmān strī samāje Imreji śikṣā', Mihir o Sudhākar, 23rd Māgh, 1309 B.S. (1903).

121. Compare this attitude with that of poet-editor Isvarchandra Gupta during the mid-19th century. In his poem Durbhikṣa Gupta satires the spread of English education among Hindu  
(continued on next page....)

years and lead to knowledge of "Urdu, Religious instruction, Bengali, History and Geography, Arithmetic, Physical environment, Hygiene, Moral training, Arts and Crafts, Embroidery, Cooking (ways of preparing many delicious dishes), Child care and looking after the members of the household, House keeping and Handwriting."<sup>122</sup>

Apparently even in 1929 Female education was still meeting opposition from orthodox religious leaders<sup>123</sup>; for Saogāt, defending it from their attacks, then wrote, "The chief impediment to Female education are the Mullās. They think that the diffusion of Female education in our society will lead inevitably to its downfall. According to them, once enlightened by education, women will become uncontrollable, their faith in religion will cease, their respect for their husbands decrease, and instead of being virtuous women they will degenerate into sources of evil. All these fears of the Mullās are groundless. By Female education we do not necessarily mean the acquisition of education in the western mould..... Probably it is through seeing this western-type that our Mullās

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(....continued from previous page)

women, saying that those pert girls, who are going in for the education, after learning the A.B.C. will turn into foreign language-speaking bibis, driving their own bogies on the Maidan.

122. Sheikh Abdur Rahman, 'Sikṣār bhitti', Al-Eslām, 5th yr., 8th no.; Agrahāyan, 1326 B.S. (1919).

123. The situation may well be compared to that in 19th century Hindu society, when Vidyasagar and Bethune encountered stiff opposition from orthodox conservatives, when campaigning for female education.

have grown alarmed.... But they do not realise that if our womenfolk are properly educated then they will not only become worthy mothers and housewives but also true mates to their husbands and competent advisers to them."<sup>124</sup>

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124. Firoza Begum, 'Amāder Śikṣār praṃojanīyatā', Saogāt, 7th yr., 1st no.; Bhādra, 1336 B.S. (1929).

## Chapter VI

Economics

Bengalee Moslem society was economically weak. The causes of its weakness were perhaps two-fold:

- i) the consequences of the loss of Bengal's sovereignty to Britain; and
- ii) the Islamic religion.

As we have seen in previous chapters, the influence of Moslems in the administration of Bengal after the abolition of Persian as the official language rapidly declined. The more flexible Hindus availed themselves of the existing commercial, educational and professional opportunities. Thus beneath the British the second rank in commerce, education and the professions was occupied in the latter half of the last century almost exclusively by Hindus. Through collaboration with Britishers, Hindus were able to begin manipulating the economy to their advantage. As we shall see in the following chapter, the legal profession was largely Hindu. Bengalee Moslems were mainly peasants. Legislation governing tenancy and property was complex. Moslems through ignorance had to turn to Hindu lawyers. The results were predictable.

Under British rule, the Islamic religion was a disadvantage.

The British had introduced a mercantile economy: Islam forbade usury. This rendered investment in industry and commerce impossible for God-fearing Moslems, who tended to maintain their traditional way of life. For the landed gentry this meant merely indulgence in ostentatious extravagance, which bankrupted both themselves and their community. Furthermore, though professedly egalitarian, Bengalee Moslem society was to some extent 'caste-conscious': certain trades and professions were despised. As a result, such occupations either became Hindu monopolies or the Moslems engaged in them were, through the contempt of their co-religionists, rendered prone to re-absorption in the Hindu community via the Suddhi movement.

The difficulties facing thinking Moslems during our period were, therefore, two-fold:

i) to adjust themselves to the British mercantile economy; and

ii) to persuade their orthodox section to facilitate this adjustment.

Strangely enough, as we shall see below, it was probably the Svadesi movement that educated Bengalee Moslems in economic thinking. In pointing out to Moslems the ways in

which they were being exploited by the British, Hindu propagandists seem to have unwittingly revealed to Bengalee Moslems only how they as a community were being milked by the Hindus. Thus under cover of the Svadeśi movement, a Sva sampradāy-movement, aimed at protecting and promoting the interests of Moslems alone, appears to have emerged.

## I

### Pre - 1919

#### (a) Drains on Communal Wealth

It would seem that prior to 1919 Moslems were conscious of two drains on their communal wealth: Litigation and Extravagance.

##### (i) Litigation

An article in Naba Nur in 1904 implied that Moslem society was enriching both the Government and the Hindu legal profession by its proclivity for litigation:<sup>1</sup> "If Moslem Society were poor, the Government trade in stamp paper would by now have ceased," and Hindu lawyers would not be obliged to live in large mansions and drive round in huge

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1. Bengalee Moslems are primarily a rural agricultural community. Laws of inheritance and tenancy are complex, and ignorance wide-spread. The scope for litigation is, therefore, great.

two-and four-horse carriages.... Very few Hindus ruin themselves in litigations the way Muslims do."<sup>2</sup>

(ii) Extravagance

The same article in Naba Nūr in 1904, claimed that Moslems were extremely extravagant:<sup>3</sup> 'Moslems pride themselves on spending all they have on sumptuous meals for themselves and for their guests.'

(b) Attitude to trade

Though wasting money in the two above ways, Moslems appear to have been disinclined to engage in trade. Islām-pracāarak, commenting on Moslem zemindars in its 8th year, stated that: "Not a single section of them engage in trade; for the moment a Moslem acquires a little status, business is beneath him."<sup>4</sup>

(c) Moslem Zemindars

Another defect in Moslem society was that their wealthiest and most influential class, namely the Zemindars, were less educated and business-minded than their Hindu counterparts.<sup>5</sup> Thus Moslem estates tended to be mismanaged,

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2. Imdadul Haq, 'Dharma ebaṃ śikṣā', Naba Nūr, 1st yr., 11th no; Fālgun, 1310 B.S. (1904).

3. See pp. 298.

4. Abdul Haq Choudhury, 'Musalmān sampradāy o tāhār patan', Islām-pracāarak, 8th yr., 11th no.

5. It was in part the Hindu landed gentry, who had facilitated the spread of mercantilism in Bengal in the 19th century.

and their owners were apparently often faced with bankruptcy. Islām-pracārak reported: "To compare Moslem and Hindu zemindars is at present ridiculous. None will deny they are as different as chalk and cheese. Whilst Hindu zemindars fill their treasuries with wealth, Moslems empty theirs. Whilst hundreds and hundreds of B.A.s and M.A.s will be found among Hindu zemindars, amongst Moslems it is difficult to find a single Entrance-pass. Moslem zemindars place all their affairs in the hands of bailiffs and managers and give themselves up to sensual enjoyment, never learning to keep daily, monthly or yearly accounts. They are constantly deceived by a pack of avaricious, obsequious, self-centred sychophants, whose sole object is to enjoy themselves at the zemindar's expense... They [Moslem zemindars] do nothing but feed their faces. It is heart-breaking to estimate how many Dewans and Choudhury sahibs [these terms denote titles used by Moslem zemindars] have been reduced to beggary ... "6

(d) Svadeśī movement

It is possible that it was the Svadeśī movement which

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6. Abdul Haq Choudhury, op.cit.

first awakened business-mindedness in Moslem society. The boycott of British goods gave a fillip to Indian industry by negating British competition.<sup>7</sup> Even whilst urging readers to bear in mind, whether or not, when shopping, the money they spent would remain within the homeland, and even whilst reporting on the vast number of small articles India had begun producing during 1906, Naba Nūr could not help commenting with pride upon a Steamer company founded in Chittagong by Moslem merchants to provide a service between Chittagong and Rangoon.<sup>8</sup> It is possible that in the foundation of such a company lay the seeds of future Moslem commercial enterprise. But for the moment Naba Nūr concentrated upon the conservation of India's wealth by the development of indigenous industry. It stated: "We must stand on our own two feet. Foreign merchants sell us crores and crores of rupees' worth of goods and thereby exploit India's wealth. Last year 22 crores of rupees' worth of foreign textiles were sold in Bengal alone. We must increase indigenous industries and stem

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7. The Indian industries thus stimulated were in the main Hindu-owned.

See chapter on Politics, p.72, f.n.31.

8. Khayer Khan Munshi, 'Svadeśī Maṅgal', Naba Nūr, 4th yr., 5th no.; Bhādra, 1313 B.S. (1906).

the import of goods from abroad." <sup>9</sup>

The way in which even during the Svadeśī movement Moslem thoughts were turning towards a kind of unofficial and undeclared 'Sva-sampradāy' (i.e. an exclusive concern with the interests of one's own community) movement<sup>10</sup> can be deduced from an article in Islām-pracāarak, reporting on an 'Islamic Conference' in Keraniganj, Dacca. The main purpose of the Conference had been to establish a 'National High English School' in Keraniganj, but a subsidiary purpose seems nevertheless to have emerged: "As a result of holding the conference the Moslem inhabitants of Keraniganj, Jinjira [in Dacca] and surrounding districts have stopped buying sweets from Hindu confectioners, and in many places groceries and so forth are being opened."<sup>11</sup>

In its 9th year Islām-pracāarak welcomed the news that thanks to the Añjumane Musalmānāne Bāngālā (Bengalee Moslem Association), more than 40 scholarships had been ear-marked for Moslem students. In Islām-pracāarak's view it was desirable that a number of these students be sent to Europe,

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9. Ibid.

10. This tendency was, in fact, a further expression of Moslem separatism.

11. Editor, 'Jātiyā o dharma saṁbād', Islām-pracāarak, 8th yr., 10th no.

America and Japan to study Industry, Science and modern Agriculture, as these constituted the best path to economic progress. "Merely increasing the number of Pleaders, Muktiars [Lower Court attorneys] and office-workers will not achieve national progress. To prosper, we must make a determined effort to improve our industry, commerce and agriculture."<sup>12</sup>

## II

1919 - 1923

### (a) Interest

The two drains on the wealth of Bengalee Moslem society, namely litigation and extravagance, were apparently still operative in 1919, and their consequences were becoming much clearer, as also was their underlying mechanism. The finance for both these activities came mainly from Hindu money-lenders on the security of Moslem property. Unpaid debts resulted in the auctioning of Moslem possessions to non-Moslems. Al-Eslām in 1919 wrote: "Debt causes an average

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12. Editor, 'Jātiyā dharma saṁbād', Islām-pracārak, 9th yr., 4th no.

of more than three hundred Moslems a day to lose their property in auctions to non-Moslems. Just look at the towns where Moslems predominate. Whole Moslem villages have fallen desolate and been repopulated by Hindus, and this is still going on. There are two main reasons for these evil trends. The first is unnecessary litigations: Moslems quarrel with each other over nothing; go to court; borrow money at interest to conduct their case; and end up losing all they own through debt. Secondly, Moslems give their sons and daughters in marriage too early; spend too much on the weddings; and, borrowing at interest for such wasteful things as dances, singing, bands, fireworks, feasts, excessive dowries, jewellery and costly clothes, fling their money away. Thus because of debts all their property and possessions pass into the hands of others and many of them are jailed for bankruptcy." To prevent these catastrophes, Al-Eslām urged that stringent social sanctions be instituted to prevent Moslems from "engaging in unnecessary litigation and from extravagance over weddings. Society should ostracise those who unnecessarily borrow money at interest ... If Moslem society continues for much longer to pour crores

and crores of rupees into the clutches of non-Moslem money-lenders, its continued survival will be in doubt."<sup>13</sup>

Despite advocating social sanctions against interest-payers,<sup>14</sup> Al-Eslām, nevertheless, drew an important distinction; for it realised that to penalise all interest-payers would strike at the very roots of commercial enterprise in Bengalee Moslem society. The Moslem attitude to interest itself was in fact one of the chief impediments to the commercial development of Moslem society. Though perhaps aware of this Al-Eslām confined itself to stating, "it would greatly harm our society if in accordance with the Śariyat [canonical law of Islam] stringent social sanctions were taken against those who borrow at interest in order to earn money by commerce."<sup>15</sup>

(b) Jute

Al-Eslām was clearly aware that the key to changing Moslem attitudes towards trade and commerce lay mainly in the hands of the Ulemā [learned Moslem doctors] and Pirs [Moslem

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13. Manirazzaman Islamabadi, 'Āñjamāne Olāmā o samāj saṃskār', Al-Eslām, 5th yr., 3rd no., Āṣāh, 1326 B.S. (1919).  
 14. Islam forabde both the giving and taking of interest: "Kurān regards ribā [a technical term in Arabic meaning usury and interest] as a practice of unbelievers and demands as a test of belief that it should be abandoned."  
 - Encyclopaedia of Islam, Vol.III,pt.2, 1936, p.1148.  
 15. Manirazzaman Islamabadi, op.cit.

Saints] and also presumably the richer zemindars; for, in order to develop industry in Moslem society, two things were apparently necessary: religious approval and finance.

Commenting upon the Jute trade in 1919 Al-Eslām indicated that most of the profit was going into the hands of non-Moslems. "While merchants are now becoming millionaires by trading in Bengal's jute, Hindu homes are becoming two and three storeyed, Mārwaris<sup>16</sup> stomachs are gradually being inflated, and their mansions are gradually raising their tops to the sky." Unfortunately, however, half the Moslems who cultivated the jute<sup>17</sup> had scarcely enough to feed and clothe themselves. "But if the Ulemā and the leading Moslems of Bengal were to combine in a concerted effort, then the Moslems would not only monopolise the cultivation of jute but also the trade in it."<sup>18</sup> The same applied to a number of other trades too. The only

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16. Mārwarī - is a Bengali term meaning a trading community coming from either Marwar or other Rajputana states. They established themselves in the cities and towns of Bengal and almost all rural trading centres, quickly securing wide-spread importance in Bengal's economy.
17. Jute has, since the middle of 19th century, been Bengal's principal cash crop and main source of foreign exchange. Bengal's economy, therefore, depended largely on the prosperity of her jute-industry, whose labour was drawn mainly from the Moslem peasantry: the Moslem-majority districts were the province's main jute-producing areas.
18. Nevertheless in 1929 Saogāt was still reporting that of the 12 crores of rupees per annum earned by Bengal's jute only 7/8th went to the growers. The rest went mainly to Mill-owners though partially to native dealers as well. - Editor, 'Baṅglār Sampād', Saogāt, 6th yr., 8thno.; Fālgun, 1335 B.S. (1929).

impediment to Moslem commercial progress, was, it would seem, the disinclination of Mullās and Pīrs to encourage people to take up such trades. Consequently, Al-Eslām maintained, "If our Mullās and Pīrs wished, then within one or two years the backward condition of the Moslems could be transformed. Within that brief space of time Moslems could virtually monopolise such excellent and profitable trades as those of the blacksmiths, potters, confectioners, dairy men, dealers in betel-leaves, goldsmiths, weavers, carpenters, grocers, money-changers and so forth."<sup>19</sup>

(c) Attitude to Trade

The same note was struck in a further article in that same 1919 issue of Al-Eslām. Moslem indifference to trade and commerce had allowed many profitable trades to become non-Moslem monopolies. "There are amongst Moslems virtually no blacksmiths, potters, goldsmiths, dealers in betel-leaves, dairy men or fishermen ... We must totally eradicate such attitudes as worrying, what people will think of us if we trade in fish. It should on the contrary be regarded as a great sin for Moslems to refuse to engage in religiously-

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19. Ismail Hossain Siraji, 'Echlām o dhanabal', Al-Eslām, 5th yr., 8th no.; Agrahāyaṇ, 1326 B.S. (1919).

sanctioned trades. The Prophet himself especially urged us to engage in trade and commerce, and bestowed great praise on these activities. He declared that tradesmen will on the day of judgement rise up and stand beside the martyrs [śahīd] and trustworthies [siddīq].<sup>20</sup> Thus by 1919 there were indications of a desire in some sections of Moslem society for a reformed attitude towards trade and commerce.

### III

#### 1923 onwards

##### (a) Drains on wealth

The drains on Moslem wealth were still operative from 1923 onwards, though around that date Moslems became aware of a further drain on their wealth, namely horse-racing. In 1923 the editor of Choltān made a move to stop it. "According to Western Law, betting on horse-races is not gambling, but it is according to Islamic law ... What remedy is there to save the remnants of the Moslem zemindar class, Moslem businessmen and office workers from this epidemic disease?"<sup>21</sup>

20. Manirazzaman Islamabadi, 'Samāj saṃskār', Al-Eslām, 5th yr., 8th no., Agrahāyaṅ, 1326 B.S. (1919).

21. Editor, 'Ghoḷḷe dāḷḷe Mochalmān', Choltān, 8th yr., 30th no.; 28th Agrahāyaṅ, 1330 B.S. (1923).

To combat extravagance Raoṣan hedāyet in 1926 urged Moslems to be thrifty. They should be discouraged from performing charitable acts on borrowed money, from demanding excessive dowries and wedding gifts, and from ostentatious display at their children's marriages. Furthermore, to conserve the wealth of the community, co-operative stores ought to be established in each village and a communal paddy store in every two or three villages. The financing of social functions ought also to be on a communal basis, each Moslem contributing according to his means, but no one ruining himself by attempting to finance the whole function alone.<sup>22</sup>

The Moslem passion for litigation continued unabated even in 1928.<sup>23</sup> The editor of Moyājjin regretted that "from the 1st of April, 1927 to the 31st of March, 1928 in the district of Faridpur alone 1,404,179 rupees and 11 annas had been spent on court fees, non-judicial stamps (ordinary and revenue), copies and plain papers. Not only that, but goodness knows how much was also spent on building mansions for pleaders and mukhtiar and on hotel accommodation for the witnesses for the defence and prosecution.....Just consider,

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22. Resolutions, Raoṣan hedāyet, 2nd yr., 5th no.; Fālgun, 1332 B.S. (1926).

23. This evil tendency is, in fact, still rife in Bengal Moslem society.

readers, how much money is being wasted in this way in the whole of Bengal as a result of disputes between brothers. And what is more, most of them are Moslem."<sup>24</sup>

(b) Interest

In 1923 Choltān reported that through paying interest during the last 100 years Moslems had lost to Hindus more than 10 thousand small and large zemindaries, 50 thousand estates (Tāluk), 3 lacs and 15 thousand landed properties (Jot), 63 thousand parcels of rent-free land (lākherāj), and also 600 crores 15 lacs and 42 thousand rupees in cash. "Bengalee Moslems are now up to their necks in debt through paying interest."<sup>25</sup>

Despite the harm done to Moslem society by interest-paying, Choltān, nevertheless, stressed its determination to oppose usury: "We do not intend to sanction usury; on the contrary, by stressing that it is forbidden, it is our intention to bring in stringent rules against both those who give and receive interest, and prevent both."<sup>26</sup>

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24. Editor, 'Harek rakam', Moyājjin, 1st yr., 1st no.; Bâisākh, 1335 B.S. (1928).
25. Ismail Hossain Siraji, 'Mochalmāndiger dāridrya samasyār samādhān', Choltān, 8th yr., 5th no.; 25th Jyāāiṣṭha, 1330 B.S. (1923).
26. Editor, 'Sud prasaṅga', Choltān, 8th yr., 31st no.; 5th Pāuṣ, 1330-B.S. (1923).

Sikhā in 1927, however, maintained that the condemnation of Usury was outmoded. It said, "The world has not stopped still in the position where it was thirteen hundred years ago." The Islamic Śariyat forbade usury, it is true, but Moslems were "fattening the other community by paying them interest, whilst at the same time arguing ourselves to death over whether or not it is permissible to accept interest.... The economics of the modern age emphasize that to create capital one must sanction the practice of interest; ... the word 'interest' excites our emotion, and the taint of interest is unbearable to us. Many of us are unwilling to accept even the interest given by Savings Banks. Life Insurance finds no favour with us ... But it is going to be difficult for us to survive if we remain indifferent much longer. The Banking system has a great influence on the modern world. But since these activities are connected with interest, Moslems shun them. Our community virtually possesses no capital ... To survive our farmers are absolutely forced to borrow ... to survive ... economic competition in the modern world we must immediately solve this interest problem."<sup>27</sup>

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27. Anwar Hossain, 'Musalmānen ārthik samasyā', Sikhā, 1st yr., Cāitra, 1333 B.S. (1927).

A further article in that same issue of Śikhā implied that the Moslem attitude to usury was one of the main causes of the decline of Moslem Society. Consequently, the magazine suggested: "To solve our economic difficulties it is even preferable that Moslems should take up usury than lose everything and become dependent on others."<sup>28</sup>

In 1928 Saogāt suggested that in view of the present complexity of the world-wide economic system it was now virtually impossible "to determine what kind of profit constitutes interest as forbidden by our religion." Saogāt pointed out that the prohibition of usury by Islam was intended to protect the poor from oppression. "The root cause of interest being forbidden and objectionable is that it harms society." Nevertheless, the world-wide Banking system, International Trade and other economic dealings had rendered the problem of interest exceedingly complex. No harm was done to society by income from Promissory Notes, Government Securities, Insurance and Provident Funds. It was therefore necessary to re-define Ribā [usury and interest]. As Moslems, Saogāt maintained, people simply had to avoid

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28. Rakibuddin Ahmad, 'Bāngālī Musalmāner ārthik samasyā'.

contact with whatever constituted interest in the true sense. It was therefore necessary to prepare a list of things "free from the taint of interest for the information of the general public by testing these things by religious criteria."<sup>29</sup>

Up till 1928 most journals seem to have implied that people borrowed not from necessity but from a pernicious urge either to engage in litigation or in ostentatious extravagance. Māsik Mohāmmadī in 1928, however, maintained that Moslems were compelled to borrow out of necessity. "It is a useless and unnatural farce to forbid people to borrow as long as no facility exists of fulfilling their temporary needs. Our Ulemā have ceaselessly enacted this useless farce, but all their sermons have failed to alleviate the sufferings of the needy, and prevent them from resorting to usurious money-lenders."<sup>30</sup>

Nevertheless, even in 1930 Moslems were still suffering at the hands of money-lenders as was revealed by the report

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29. Abdul Majid (Sāhitya ratna), 'Sud samasyā', Saogāt, 6th yr., 1st no.; Śrābaṇ, 1335 B.S. (1928).

30. Mohammad Akram Khan, 'Samasyā o samādhān', Māsik Mohāmmadī, 1st yr., 10th no.; Śrābaṇ, 1335 B.S. (1928).

of the Bengal Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee which demonstrated that money-lenders were gradually dispossessing farmers of their land throughout Bengal. "The rural cultivators are gradually being turned into day-labourers. Can the Moslem members of the Bengal Legislative Assembly not do anything to check this devastation?"<sup>31</sup>

(c) Co-operative Movement

As early as 1926 Raoṣan hedāyet suggested that a 'co-operative store' be established in each village as a means of preventing people from ruining themselves through ostentatious extravagance, and in 1928 Moyājjin had suggested that the foundation of co-operative funds might "save rural farmers from the clutches of oppressive money-lenders."

To obviate the possibility of embezzlement, the Fund might be used as capital to "open a branch of the Central Co-operative Bank." The establishment of such banks would facilitate the borrowing of money at low interest.<sup>32</sup>

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31. Editor, 'Bānglār mahājan', Māsik Mohāmmadī, 3rd yr., 11th no.; Bhādra, 1337 B.S. (1930).

32. Mohammad Abdur Rashid B.A.B.T., 'Mosalmān samājer durabsthā o tāhār pratikār,' Moyājjin, 1st yr., 1st no.; Bâisākh, 1335 B.S. (1928).

It is to be noted that this proposal to establish a bank to facilitate the borrowing of money at interest was, needless to say, put forward by a western-educated graduate, not a member of orthodox Mullā-section.

Another article in Moyājjin in 1929 outlined the value of the Co-operative movement. The movement would, Moyājjin stated, stimulate the growth of mutual brotherhood, sympathy and collaboration; infuse thrift, business-mindedness and astuteness; and facilitate the taking-over of large trading enterprises on a co-operative basis: "there would not be any shortage of capital."<sup>33</sup>

(d) Attitude to Trade

According to Choltān, writing in 1923, with the exception of Moslems in the districts of Dacca and Chittagong, Bengalee Moslems were indifferent to trade and commerce. Their indifference had presumably facilitated the "extraordinary and unprecedented progress achieved by Mārwarīs in trade and commerce in Bengal and Assam during the last 30 to 40 years." Choltān feared that "the way things are going in 25 years time Hindus and Mārwarīs will have become our complete masters, and our whole race will have been reduced to a race of porters, labourers, book-binders, butlers, orderlies, peons, messengers, watchmen and servants."<sup>34</sup>

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33. Anwar Hossain, 'Samabāy samiti', Moyājjin, 1st yr., 4th no.; Māgh, 1335 B.S. (1929).

34. Ismail Hossain Siraji, op.cit.

In 1925 Raoṣan hedāyet indicated that there was indeed a strong religious sanction for the opening of shops by Moslems:<sup>35</sup> "Buying and selling by you', has been declared in the Holy Qorān by Allah himself, 'to be permitted' ... so we must open Moslem shops in every village and market ... If one man's money does not suffice to do so, then they should be opened as joint ventures. Unless you do this, you will be a sinner."<sup>36</sup>

The following month Raoṣan hedāyet pursued a similar theme declaring that without money the proper performance of a Moslem's religious duty was impossible. Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca), Zākāt (compulsory poor tax), Fiṭra (Alms to be given on the eve of 'Id-al-Fiṭr'), Korbāni (sacrifice of animals) etc., the founding of Mādrāssās and Maktabas, the propagation of Islam, social reform and the patronage of literature and cultivation of knowledge all required money. It was, therefore, imperative that Moslems should engage in Agriculture, Industry, Trade, Commerce and Business, working as Commission Agents, opening shops and becoming artisans. Firms, Trading Companies, Stores, Pharmacies and Factories all

35. See also pp. 300-02.

36. Editor, 'Aḥbān', Raoṣan hedāyet, 2nd yr., 3rd no.; Pāus, 1332 B.S. (1925).

lead to the acquisition of wealth which was essential to Islam. "If you are once more to enjoy good fortune and become the lords of the world", Raoṣan hedāyēt maintained, then the acquisition of wealth through commerce and trade was imperative.<sup>37</sup>

A month later Raoṣan hedāyēt attacked two other impediments to commercial progress, namely, the disrepute associated with certain trades and the possibility of commercial failure. It said, "No one should regard those engaging in these trades [i.e. blacksmiths, goldsmiths, tanners, barbers, milkmen, potters, confectioners, fish-sellers and lime producers] as socially inferior or ostracized. Moslem society must be particularly vigilant that the trades carried on by their people are patronised extensively by their own community."<sup>38</sup>

Moyājjin in 1928 seemed to feel that Moslem society could be more productive provided it dedicated its whole energies to working with assiduity. 50 to 60 per cent of the vitality of the peasantry was, according to Moyājjin

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37. M.Serajul Haq Mian, 'Echlām o arthanīti', Raoṣan hedāyēt, 2nd yr., 4th no.; Māgh, 1332 B.S. (1926).

38. Resolutions, op.cit.

"wasted in gossiping, marketing and litigations." The more affluent leisured classes, which constituted 1/6th of the community, "have as a class at no time felt the urge to work, and still do not." Moyājjin placed part of the blame for this on the lack of a law of Primogeniture, as practised in England. Since in Moslem society every son was entitled to inherit part of the family's ancestral property none felt it necessary to earn a living. "If only one son were to inherit, ... then probably very few of our people would have the opportunity of remaining lazy."<sup>39</sup>

Six months later Moyājjin lamented the lack of Moslems in the Faridpur Agricultural Institute, where practical training in agriculture was being given to five youngmen per year. "Some people maintain that Moslems ... are already peasants, so there is no need for them to undergo training in order to become peasants again. In our view, however, every household in the rural areas desperately needs a trained agriculturist. Moslems throughout Bengal may be peasants, but without exception they are ignorant, and nothing can be done well by an ignoramus."<sup>40</sup>

39. Byāthātur, 'Saktir apacāy', Moyājjin, 1st yr., 2nd no.; Śrāban, 1335 B.S. (1928).

40. Editor, 'Faridpure bekār samasyā-samādhān,' Moyājjin, 1st yr., 4th no; Māgh, 1335 B.S. (1929).

(e) Moslem Companies

In 1923 Choltān reported on a proposal to form a Joint Stock Company called the 'Bombay Moslem Company'. It was on the one hand to "cement relations between Turkish and Indian Moslems", and on the other "both to free and widen the path to the achievement of trading-investments between the peoples of both countries".<sup>41</sup> Presumably the proposal was in part motivated by the Khilāfat movement of which Choltān was the chief organ in Bengal. Later that same year Choltān was advocating a campaign to launch companies with capitals of between 5 and 10 lacs of rupees in every trading centre and every headquarter and subdivision in each district. To enable even the poor to participate, share-prices were to be between 5 and 10 rupees a piece. Choltān was optimistic about the outcome of the campaign; for, it maintained, since virtually everywhere the small traders were Moslems, it ought not to be difficult to induce them to buy shares.<sup>42</sup>

(f) Svadeśī

In 1924 Sāmyabādī was reporting regretfully on the failure

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41. Editor, 'Mochalmān Kompānī', Choltān, 8th yr., 1st no.; 28th Bāisākh, 1330 B.S. (1923).

42. Ismail Hossain Siraji, op.cit.

of political leaders to persuade people to abandon foreign textiles, even after three years of unremitting campaigning. "What clearer sign can there be of the impending doom of our nation, if even those who do not get sufficient to eat are indifferent to making clothes with home-spun thread?"<sup>43</sup> Those without the leisure to spin, such as urban gentlemen and students, could, nevertheless, help to popularise home-spun textiles (Khaddar) merely by buying them. Nevertheless, it would seem that underlying Sāmyabādī's campaign to popularise Khaddar was a desire to stimulate production within Bengal; for Sāmyabādī appears to have regarded Manchester and Mārwarī mill-owners as virtually synonymous: "Before we put our money into the pockets of Manchester or Mārwarī mill-owners, why do not we ask ourselves whether or not the cloth made by our poor fellow-countrymen is lying

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43. During the Non-cooperation - Svarāj movements, Svadeśī agitations were revived by the new fervour of nationalism: 'The spinning wheel [i.e. Carkā] should become the symbol of India's new life and the wearing of Khādi [or Khaddar i.e. cloth made of home-spun thread] a gesture of the nation's rejection of imperialism.' But the comparative high price of Khaddar made it unpopular, particularly among the poor. Furthermore, rational and radical politicians had little faith in Khaddar alone bringing Svarāj. Intellectuals, too, were peeved by excessive Gandhian regard for the Carkā. See Rabindranath Tagore, 'Carkā', 'Svarāj Sādhan', Kālāntar, 1948; and Nazrul Islam, 'Sabyasācī', Saṅcitā, 1949, p.108.

unsold?"<sup>44</sup> Sāmyabādī continued on the same theme some months later claiming that even the one or two mills Bengal did possess, were doing little good for the country since all the thread was imported from abroad. To bring back prosperity to Bengal Sāmyabādī advocated the founding of weaving works throughout the Province and the making of the primary stages in weaving a Cottage industry. This would provide work not only for Bengalee women but also unemployed males.<sup>45</sup>

In 1930 Moyājjin deplored the apathy of Moslems in regard to the development of indigenous commerce and industry as part of the Independence movement. Moslems, according to Moyājjin, "seem to have taken a vow not to touch Khaddar at any price. Yet a glance at Bengal and Assam clearly shows that the majority of weavers are Moslems. This vast Moslem artisan class could begin virtually to monopolise the Khaddar trade in this country by producing it themselves."<sup>46</sup>

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44. Abul Mansur Ahmad, B.A., 'Khaddar pariba kena?', Sāmyabādī, 2nd yr., 2nd no.; Fālgun, 1330 B.S. (1924).  
 45. Maolvi Mohammad Nurul Haq, 'Baṣon śilpa', Sāmyabādī, 2nd yr., 4th-5th no.; Aṣārḥ-Bhādra, 1331 B.S. (1924).  
 46. Editor, 'Khaddar o Musalmān samāj', Moyājjin, 2nd yr., 7th-8th no.; Bāisākh-Jyāāiṣṭha, 1337 B.S. (1930).

Some time earlier in 1929 Moyājjin had been lamenting the failure of the Svadeśī movement in cigarettes: "Despite the endless imprecations to boycott foreign goods made during the Svadeśī movement, the country is now importing  $2\frac{1}{2}$  crores of rupees worth of cigarettes i.e. more than 14 times the amount [before the Svadeśī movement commenced]."47

(g) Insurance

An article by a Moslem graduate in Saogāt in 1929 urged Moslem young men to take up Insurance as a means of gaining a livelihood. He maintained, "There is no reason to be upset if Hindu gentlefolk do not insure their lives through Moslem agents. The number of Moslem policy-holders nowadays is not slight and is constantly increasing. It is, therefore, merely a confession of ignorance to state that Moslem agents would not earn a living or that Moslem young men who launched Insurance Companies would not get business."48

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47. Editor, 'Bideśī barjan', Moyājjin, 1st yr., 4th no.; Māgh, 1335 B.S. (1929).

48. Sadat Ali Akhand B.L., 'Jīban bīmā', Saogāt, 7th yr., 2nd no.; Āśvin, 1336 B.S. (1929).

## IV

Fear of Hindu economic dominance

It would seem that throughout our period the Moslem press had, in their economic thinking, been motivated largely by a fear of Hindu economic dominance in Bengal.<sup>49</sup> The lawyers benefitting by the drain on wealth of Moslems through litigations were largely Hindu. Hindu zemindars were better educated and more businessminded than their Moslem counterparts, whose estates through mismanagement were often auctioned off to redeem unpaid debts. Unpaid debts were resulting in the repopulation of Moslem towns and villages by Hindus; for the money-lenders to whom Moslem homesteads and houses were mortgaged were almost invariably Hindu. Moslem apathy to trade had allowed Hindus virtually to monopolise such profitable trades as those of blacksmiths, potters, goldsmiths, betel-leaf dealers, dairymen and fishermen. The profits from Jute not taken by whites presumably went to Hindu Mārwaris.<sup>50</sup> Indeed, it was feared that within twenty<sup>^ five</sup> years' time the Hindus and Mārwaris would be virtually masters of Bengal and the

49. It was, one may recall, the threat of Hindu economic ascendancy that prevented Moslems joining the Svadeśī movement. See also chapter on Politics.

50. Ismail Hossain Siraji, 'Echlām o'dhanabal' Al-Eslām, 5th yr., 8th no.; Agraḥāyāṃ, 1326 B.S. (1919).

Moslems reduced to a mere unskilled working class. As was seen above, mill owners were not only the British in Manchester but also the Hindu Marwāris in India. Both were seen as equally bad. The anger of Hindus, envisaged at the opening of Moslem shops, would tend to suggest that Bengalee shop-keepers were mainly Hindu.<sup>51</sup> Up till 1929 the Hindus seemed to have been dominating the Insurance business. In fact, the position of Moslems in Bengal seems to have been summed up largely by Sikhā in 1927: "The number of Moslems in occupations other than farming is insignificant. In comparison to Hindus they are about 1 to 5. There are virtually no Moslems in the main commercial centres of Bengal ..... The main centres of industry and commerce are the towns, and the number of Moslems in towns is gradually diminishing. Whereas 20 years ago there were 457 Moslems and 535 Hindus to each square mile in Dacca, there are now 413 Moslems and 579 Hindus. The majority of Moslem tradesmen [in Dacca] are coach men, boat men, and tailors, though if you search hard enough you might come across a

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51. Editor, Raośan hedāyet in its Pâuṣ issue, 1332 B.S. (1925) refers to the Hindus' dissatisfaction at the opening of Moslem shops.

Moslem draper or stationer. The Dacca Moslems monopolize the hide trade, but no Moslem there aspires to open a tannery, employing skilled tanners. Whereas twice as many Moslems as Hindus are peasants, twice as many Hindus as Moslems are zemindars. Most of the powerful landlords are Hindus ... Through lack of foresight almost all Moslem zemindars are bankrupt, and those few who are not are on the way there."<sup>52</sup>

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52. Rakibuddin Ahmad, op.cit.

## Chapter VII

Language

If asked to state the underlying theme of this thesis, we should simply say this: the gradual clarification of the identity of Bengalee Moslems. So far in the six foregoing chapters two major tendencies are discernible:

- i) on the part of orthodox Moslem society, supported by some intellectuals, to identify Bengalee Moslems with the Moslem World of the Middle-East; and
- ii) on the part of most Hindus, to identify Bengalee Moslems as aliens to Bengal, whose existence and interests could, as far as education, literature, politics and the economy were concerned, be largely ignored.

There was, however, a third tendency, which was gradually to gain attention: namely, on the part of Bengalees, both Hindu and Moslem, of a more rational, secular outlook to seek in tolerance and mutual respect a path, whereby people of all persuasions might peacefully co-exist in Bengal.

The name by which the Bengalee Moslem is identified consists of two parts: 'Bengalee', and 'Moslem'. The two

major tendencies stress the second part: 'Moslem'. This according to the orthodox identified Bengalee Moslems as 'included in the Moslem World of the Middle East' and according to most Bengalee Hindus as 'excluded from Bengal'. These conflicting tendencies between inclusion and exclusion were at the root of the Bengalee Moslem linguistic dilemma. Inclusion in the Middle-Eastern Moslem World meant clinging to Arabic, Persian (and Urdu). Exclusion from Bengal meant the banning by Hindus of the use of Perso-Arabic-Urdu diction in Bengali language and literature.

Inclusion in the Middle-East and exclusion from Bengal were complementary tendencies, whose inevitable outcome was Moslem separatism in politics, literature, education and economics. As we have seen in the foregoing chapters, the tendency towards Moslem separatism in these spheres was strong. Indeed, its ultimate consequence was to be the creation of Pakistan. In the explosively-communal atmosphere of our period the third tendency, emphasising the first element in the Bengalee Moslem title, no matter how rational, was none the less weak. The vast majority of Bengalee Moslems were ethnically Bengalee. Their Western-educated

wing was culturally Bengalee also, which at this period meant 'to some extent Hinduised in outlook'. It was only the aristocratic section with their upper-middle class, urban hangers-on, who were non-Bengalee in outlook. These were the people, who in collaboration with orthodox religious leaders stressed the 'Moslem' element in the Bengalee Moslem title.

It was natural that they should do so. All their prestige and pride was linked with the Middle-East, from which they claimed to have derived, and with which they strove to maintain political, economic, cultural and religious links. On the other hand, it was equally natural that the more educated, enlightened sections of Bengalee Moslem society should stress the 'Bengalee' element in their make-up. World-wide religious allegiances were a characteristic of the Middle Ages, not the Middle East. The Ottoman Empire was crumbling from within. Geographic nationalism was sprouting. Islam was being rebuilt in a form to facilitate adjustment to twentieth-century political and economic conditions. To imagine Bengalee Moslems having more in common with the Middle East

than Bengal was a phantasy. Bengalee Moslems must awaken from dreams of Mediaeval splendour and realistically adjust to Modern Bengal.

The analysis and presentation of Bengalee Moslem expressions of opinion in regard to language are difficult. Several contemporaneous, criss-crossing trends of opinion can be discerned relating to: the mother tongue of the Bengalee Moslems; the role of Urdu; the position of Arabic; the identity of the Bengalee Moslem community, as, possibly part of a Bengalee nation: or, part of an All-India Moslem nation; or, part of a world-wide Moslem nation or brotherhood; and also to the strength of the Bengalee Moslem claim to the Bengali language and what they needed to do in order to accommodate that language and its literature to their own national communal needs.

This chapter will therefore fall into two parts: one, the identity of the Bengalee Moslem community and its linguistic problems; two, the need to modify Bengali language and literature in order to render it suitable for the Bengalee Moslem people.

## I

Bengali, Urdu and Arabic

- (i) The mother-tongue of the Bengali Moslems: Bengali or Urdu?

Controversy over this question continued throughout the whole of our period. The debate does seem, however, to comprise two phases: one, 1900 to 1917; two, 1917 to 1930.

- (a) The first phase: 1900 to 1917

During the first phase Bengalee Moslem society seemed to consist of broadly three sections: an urban, aristocratic section, reinforced by the Ulemā; the Western educated class, and the rural masses.

1. The urban aristocratic Moslems and the Ulemā

- (a) Who were they?

According to Nur-al-imān, in 1900 they were: "The aristocratic Moslems and their retainers."<sup>1</sup>

Naba Nūr, 1903: "leaders of our society who live in town and have no connection with rural society outside ..."<sup>2</sup>

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1. 'Nur-āl-imāner āpil', Nur-al-imān, 1st yr., 3rd no.; 1307 B.S. (1900).  
 2. Editor, 'Mātr bhāsā o Baṅgīya Musalmān', Naba Nūr, 1st yr. 9th no.; Pāuṣ, 1310 B.S. (1903).

Al-Eslām, 1917: "a few non-Bengalee Moslems dwell in Calcutta for professional reasons. Many have become permanent residents..."

Al-Eslām, 1917 again: "these people have married Urdu-speaking women in Calcutta and out of deference to their wives foresaken their own mother [presumably country of origin, Bengal] and address their mother-in-law [country of adoption, where Urdu is spoken] as mother instead.

"There is another group who become absolutely infatuated the moment they see that twisted script [i.e. Perso-Arabic-Urdu script] ..."<sup>3</sup>

That is, this urban group comprised some Bengalee aristocratic Moslems, some non-Bengalee businessmen, some people who had married Urdu-speaking women and some people infatuated with the Arabic script.

(b) What nationality could these people claim? Or, how could they identify themselves?

According to Bāsānā in 1909: "Even those whose forefathers actually came here from those lands [Arabia, Persia, Afghanistan or Turkey] can not now identify themselves

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3. Mozaffar Ahmad, 'Urdu Bhāṣā o Baṅgiya Musalman', Al-Eslām, 3rd yr., 4th no.; Śrābaṅ, 1324 B.S. (1917).

as belonging to the Arab, Persian or Afghan nations."<sup>4</sup>

Al-Eslām in 1917: "a group of collaborators who are almost all genuine Bengalees."<sup>5</sup>

(c) What language do they speak?

According to Nur-al-imān in 1900: "[They] speak Urdu."<sup>6</sup>

Islām-pracāarak: "A handful of urban Moslems speak Urdu ..."<sup>7</sup>

Al-Eslām, 1917: "Having seen only the hotch potch Moslems of Calcutta, they [non-Bengalee Moslems] conclude that the Moslems of Bengal have no definite language. This is a gross error on their part. Calcutta may be part of Bengal but it is not the whole of it ..."<sup>8</sup>

(d) Was the language they spoke genuine Urdu?

According to Nur-al-imān, 1900: "many of them [Bengalee aristocratic Moslems and their retainers] are unable even to use those chewed, swallowed words of the Western Urdu-speaking people in the correct sense, correct form and correct

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4. Hamed Ali, 'Uttar Baṅger Musalmān sāhitya', Bāsanā, 2nd vol., 1st no.; Bāisākh, 1316 B.S. (1909).
  5. Mozaffar Ahmad, op.cit. Actually there can be conflicting concepts of nationality at play in this chapter. For example Bāsanā's statement seems based partly on domicile and partly on language. Elsewhere concepts based on religion will be voiced.
  6. 'Nur-al-imāner āpīl', op.cit.
  7. Abdul Haq Chaudhury, 'Musalmān sampradāy o tāhār patan', Islām-pracāarak, 8th yr., 11th no.
  8. Mozaffar Ahmad, op.cit.

place, let alone express in it the feelings of their hearts."<sup>9</sup>

(e) What was their attitude to Bengali?

According to Nur-al-imān, 1900: "[They] disliked the Bengali language ... Even though it is easier for them to express their feelings in Bengali, they desist from doing so ..."<sup>10</sup>

Naba Nur, 1903: "[They] label the Bengali language 'the language of cowards'."<sup>11</sup>

Al-Eslām, 1915: "The deadly disease of expressing contempt for Bengali, of proclaiming, even though they are Bengalees, that their mother-tongue is either Urdu or Arabic and of saying such things as: either, 'I do not know Bengali', or, 'I have forgotten it', is confined to only one class of Moslems. Is it not extremely shameful that they should express such opinions? There is not the least doubt that those who behave like this are denigrating their own mother and mother-land and are advertising the poverty and inferiority of their own mother and country."<sup>12</sup>

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9. 'Nur-al-imāner āpīl', op.cit.

10. Ibid.

11. Editor, 'Mātr bhāṣā o Bāṅgīyā Musalmān', op.cit.

12. Khademol Eslam Bangabasi, 'Bāṅgalīr mātrbhāṣā', Al-Eslām 1st yr., 7th no.; Kārtik, 1322 B.S. (1915).

Al-Eslām, 1916: "[Edicts (Fatwā's) have been proclaimed, saying] The Bengali language is the language of Hindus and consequently undeserving of our respect."<sup>13</sup>

(f) Why did they champion Urdu?

According to Naba Nūr, 1903: "[They] desire to create a single mother-tongue for Moslems throughout the whole of India by forcibly conferring upon Urdu the status of the mother-tongue of Bengalee Moslems..."<sup>14</sup>

Islām-pracārak: "The decline...commenced from the day [1837] Lord William Bentinck made Bengali the language of the Courts in place of Persian. The Moslems were an imperial race; it impaired their prestige not to speak either Urdu or Persian. This feeling has, I think, not yet disappeared from the upper classes..."<sup>15</sup> [Italics mine]

Al-Eslām, 1916: "'Such holy books as the Qorān and Hādith cannot be translated into it [Bengali], nor can our

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- 13. Abdul Malek Choudhury, 'Baṅga sāhitye Śrihaṭṭer Musalmān', Al-Eslām, 2nd yr., 6th no.; Āsvin, 1323 B.S. (1916).
  - 14. Editor, 'Mātrbhāṣā o Baṅgiya Musalmān', op.cit.
  - 15. Abdul Haq Choudhury, op.cit. Nawab Abdul Latif said in 1884: "For the middle and upper middle classes of [Bengal] Muhammadans the Urdu should be recognised as the vernacular." - Education Commission:- Report by the Bengal Provincial Committee, 1884, p.216.

religious ceremonies be discussed in it. It is Urdu that is the mother-tongue of the Moslems and it is in Urdu that we must converse with each other and indeed even dream -'. These kind of edicts have been proclaimed everywhere and their influence has not been vain. It is as a result of them that many people still cling to the unnatural and extraordinary desire to sow the seed of Urdu in the clay of Bengal. What can be more unnatural than this?"<sup>16</sup> [italics mine]

One deduces from this comment that certain Ulemā were collaborating with Calcutta aristocrats and Urdu-speaking immigrants to propagate Urdu.

According to Al-Eslām in 1917: "[Non-Bengalee Moslems] are trying to promote their mother-tongue. This is very praiseworthy..."<sup>17</sup>

ibid: "There are some who think that Urdu literature has attained the peak of excellence and therefore Bengalees by virtue of being Moslem ought to learn Urdu."

Thus, according to their opponents, the advocates of

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16. Abdul Malek Choudhury, op.cit.

17. Mozaffar Ahmad, op.cit.

Urdu were motivated partly by their desire to create a lingua franca, partly by imperial pride and by religious and cultural considerations.

2. The western-educated<sup>18</sup> and the rural Moslem society.

Our sole source of information on the identity and characteristics of these groups is Nur-al-imān in 1900. The western-educated were presumably:

"Those who have learnt Bengali by studying books by Hindu authors with Hindu teachers in the Pāthśālās and have learnt Sanskritic Bengali parrot-fashion."<sup>19</sup>

They spoke - "Literary Sanskritised Bengali ... when both speaking and writing they use the literary diction of Sanskrit Pundits."

Their attitude to Bengali was: "They dislike and regard as alien [yābanik] such words as Wadu [ablution], gochal [bathing], fard [obligatory], wājib [obligatory], halāl [lawful], hāram [forbidden], Allāh [God], Rasul [prophet] etc.

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18. See chapter on Society for the description of Western educated Moslems; actually there were two broad subdivisions: (i) Anglicised, and (ii) Hinduised in regard to dress, manners and social attitude.
19. c f. Nawab Abdul Latif in 1884: "The Sanskritised dialects of the Bengali language which at present prevails in Pāthśālās, as the result of the combined influence of Hindu authors, teachers, pupils and educationists." - Education Commission. op.cit.p.213. See also chapter on Education. pp. 252, 260-64.

which are inalienably connected with Islam. They translate all these words into Sanskritic literary Bengali."<sup>20</sup>

That is, linguistically they are completely Hinduised.

As regards rural Moslem society, all we learn of them is that they presumably spoke "vigorous natural Bengali" as opposed to the literary Sanskritic. Nevertheless, it would seem from some comments that despite their ignorance of Urdu some of the attitudes of the urban sophisticated Moslems had penetrated amongst them. One deduces these conclusions from the following extracts:

Ignorance of Urdu

This seems implied in Kohinur, 1916: "...the failure of both Urdu periodicals in Bengal and of learned Maolvis who, though ignorant of the Bengali language are attempting to disseminate knowledge..."<sup>21</sup>

And in Baṅgīya-Musalmān-Sāhitya-pātrikā, 1919: "One of the main reasons for .... the general failure of the Ulemā to achieve success is their ignorance of their mother-tongue."<sup>22</sup>

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20. 'Nur-al-imāner' āpil, op.cit.

21. Mohammad Yakub Ali Choudhury, 'Baṅgālī Musalmāner bhāṣā o sāhitya', Kohinur, Māgh, 1322 B.S. (1916).

22. Mohammad Akram Khan, 'Abhibhāṣaṇ', Baṅgīya-Musalmān-sāhitya-pātrikā, 1st yr., 4th no.; Māgh, 1325 B.S. (1919).

How far had the attitude of the urban sophisticated Moslems penetrated?

The degree of penetration may be deduced from the following two extracts which obviously do not refer to urban sophisticated Moslems; e.g.

Bāsanā, 1909: "Many of us are still deluded. When going to sleep in the mango groves or bamboo forests of Bengal they still dream of Baghdad, Bokhara, Kabul and Kandahar."<sup>23</sup>

And Al-Eslām, 1916: "...who, while sleeping in their huts in mango groves and in bamboo forests of Bengal in Sylhet still dream of Baghdad, Bokhara, Kabul, Kandahar and Iran, Turan..."<sup>24</sup>

Their attitude towards Urdu

This again can be deduced from Bāsanā, 1909: "Some are so grossly deluded as to wish to make Urdu their mother-tongue instead of Bengali, just as weak people dream supernatural things, so nations in decline cling to unnatural fantasies."<sup>25</sup> [italics mine]

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23. Hamed Ali, op.cit.

24. Abdul Malek Choudhury, op.cit.

25. Hamed Ali, op.cit.

3. The Bengalee Moslems as a whole.

(a) What was their mother-tongue?

At first the journals were a little hesitant in claiming Bengali to be the mother-tongue of the Bengalee Moslems. Nur-al-imān in 1900 stated, "We Bengalee Moslems have no language of our own...",<sup>26</sup> but gradually they began to state with greater and greater firmness that their mother-tongue was Bengali. For example, Naba Nūr in 1903 wrote:

"What else but the Bengali language could be the mother-tongue of Bengalee Moslems?"<sup>27</sup>

Islām-pracārak a few years later: "...everyone admits that our mother-tongue is Bengali."<sup>28</sup>

Bāsanā, 1909: "...our mother-tongue is Bengali.... The language which first entered our ears on birth, which we have used all our lives, in which we express our joys and sorrows, our happiness and pain and in which we converse in the market place, in business and commerce and in our professional lives and in which we dream when we are in sleep -

26. 'Nur-al-imāner āpīl', op.cit.

27. Editor, 'Mātrbhāṣā o Baṅgiyā Musalmān', op.cit.

28. Abdul Haq Choudhury, op.cit.

is Bengali."<sup>29</sup>

Kohinur, 1916: "It is as clear as day that the mother-tongue of the Bengalee Moslems is Bengali."<sup>30</sup>

Al-Eslām, 1917: "The mother-tongue of the Bengalee Moslems was Bengali even before the Urdu language was born."<sup>31</sup>

(b) How did they identify themselves?

According to Islām-pracārak:

"It is no exaggeration even to say that we are now natives of this country ... having lived in this country for five hundred years ... we are Bengalee..."<sup>32</sup>

According to Bāsanā, 1909: "No matter whether our forefathers came from Arabia, Persia, Afghanistan or Turkey, nor whether they were Hindus from this country, we are now Bengalees .... What can be more regrettable and surprising than that we, who have lived in this country for the last seven hundred years still do not acknowledge it as our home land?"<sup>33</sup>

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29. Hamed Ali, op.cit.

30. Mohammad Yakub Ali Choudhury, op.cit.

31. Mozaffar Ahmad, op.cit.

32. Abdūl Haq Choudhury, op.cit. "The ordinary Bengalee Mahomedan is, however, by race, language, and habits a Bengalee pure and simple." - Sir George Campbell, Memoirs of My Indian Career; Vol.II, 1893, p.311.

For origin of Moslems in Bengal see Imperial Gazetteer of India, Bengal, Vol.I, 1909, pp.46-47; Sir Herbert Risley, The People of India, 1915, p.122.

33. Hamed Ali, op.cit.

According to Baᅅgiya-Musalmān-Sāhitya-patrikā, 1918:

"This much is certain that not all the ancestors of the Bengalee Moslems came to Bengal from Arabia, Iran and Turan or Turkey. If you examine the genealogies of many of them you will see that the founders of their families became separated from Hindu society in Bengal and by conversion to Islam became Moslems. They have, therefore, been unable to abandon their mother-tongue . . ."<sup>34</sup>

Thus it would seem that the Bengali vernacular Press, to which we have access, was virtually unanimous in feeling that by language and birth-place Bengalee Moslems were Bengalee, and after 1917 they vigorously rejected attempts to make Urdu the mother-tongue of the Bengalee Moslems. Possibly if the advocates of Urdu had seen for it merely a role as a lingua franca for Indian Moslems, their case would have been accepted. It was presumably their advocacy of Urdu as the mother-tongue replacing Bengali that was unacceptable.

Naba Nūr in 1903 said, "[The urban Bengalee Moslem leaders] are merely trying to perform the impossible"; and furthermore,

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34. Syed Emdad Ali, 'Baᅅga bhāᅅā o Musalmān', Baᅅgiya-Musalmān-Sāhitya-Patrikā, 1st yr., 2nd no., Śrābaᅅ, 1325 B.S. (1918)

"it is no more possible to stop the prevalency of Bengali in Bengalee Moslem society" than it is "to turn back the Ganges to its Himalayan source".<sup>35</sup> Kohinur in 1916 stated, "However necessary it may be to introduce Urdu into Bengal in order to create an All-India nationhood that attempt is as useless as trying to build a house in the sky ... The growth of nationhood will not in the least be impeded if one releases the general public from the necessity of learning Urdu."<sup>36</sup> Rejecting the cultural argument in favour of Urdu, Al-Islām in 1917 cried, "It is extremely difficult to ascertain in which country-bazar in India the Urdu language was confined when the Bengalee Moslem poet [Alaol - circa 1607-'80] composed his Padmābatī Kāvya? ... The Urdu-speakers have enriched their own language by translating Arabic works into Urdu. Why should we have to learn Urdu on that account? Is it in order that we should make translations from the translations? The original is bound to be ruined by the time the third copy is made .... What is it that makes Urdu so desirable for us? More than half the Moslems in India speak Bengali, and the remainder speak various other languages. 'Nevertheless Bengalee

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35. Editor, 'Mātrbhāṣā o Baṅgīya Musalmān', op.cit.

36. Mohammad Yakub Ali Choudhury, op.cit.

Moslems must learn Urdu' - this is a fine piece of oppression and no mistake. Let Urdu, the language of the bazar [i.e. the market place] and the army camp prevail in the bazar and the army camp.<sup>37</sup> What necessity is there to teach it compulsorily to the whole nation? And what place in Urdu-speaking regions is so flooded with Islamic sentiment that we Bengalee Moslems must also accept Urdu? ...<sup>38</sup> In short, we in Bengal can never encourage Urdu. If anyone wishes to learn it for a hobby then let him do so, but as far as Bengal is concerned Urdu is unnecessary."<sup>39</sup>

(b) The Second phase: 1917 to 1930

Actually throughout phase 1 and phase 2 of this controversy over the mother-tongue of Bengalee Moslems another controversy over the role of Urdu as a lingua franca in India was also gaining clearer and clearer definition. Round about 1917, as the Bengali Moslem press would seem to indicate, a further complication entered this second controversy; for, by that time Bengalee Moslems had become conscious of the

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37. 'Urdu' was originally a Turkish word, meaning 'belonging to the camp or to the royal army.'

38. The strongest argument in favour of Urdu being learnt by Bengalee Moslems was that numerous Islamic scriptures, histories and works of literature had been rendered into it from Perso-Arabic sources. The same argument could be applied to Urdu-speakers learning Bengali, however, with equal validity.

39. Mozaffar Ahmad, op.cit.

advocacy of Hindu nationalists, such as Gokhale (1866-1915), Gandhi (1869-1948) and Tilak (1856-1920), in favour of Hindi becoming the State language of the future independent state of India. In reaction to this, Moslems began to put forward the view that the only language fitted for this meritorious role was Urdu. Thus from about 1917 Urdu acquired a second potential role as the future State language of independent India. This naturally had the effect of mobilizing greater support for Urdu in Bengal, thus to some extent affecting the earlier controversy over the mother-tongue of the Bengalee Moslems.

From 1917 onwards Bengalee Moslems continued, however, to hammer away at these two issues, which by then ought to have been settled. They continued to state that Bengali was their mother-tongue; e.g. Banglīya-Musalmān-Sāhitya-Patrikā, 1918: "There can be no two opinions about the fact that Bengali is the mother-tongue of the Bengalee Moslems despite some of them being infatuated with Urdu ... both Hindus and Moslems have an equal right to claim Bengali as their mother tongue."<sup>40</sup>

Some months later the same journal published an Address<sup>41</sup>

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40. Syed Emdad Ali, op.cit.

41. The Presidential Address by Mohammad Akram Khan delivered at the Third Annual session of Banglīya Musalmān Sāhitya Sammelan (Bengal Moslem Literary Conference) held in 1918.

which declared that Bengali had always been the mother-tongue of the Bengalee Moslems and that the Bengalee Moslems had been the first to patronize and encourage Bengali literature.<sup>42</sup>

In 1919 Baṅga Nūr declared that "all Bengalee Moslems have now selected Bengali as their mother-tongue."<sup>43</sup> Moslem Bhārat in 1920 claimed, "Moslems have now welcomed Bengali as their mother-tongue and, indeed, the Bengali language is now ensconced in a golden throne even amongst their women-folk. Moslems now fully realise they have no other way of expressing the feelings of their hearts..."<sup>44</sup> In 1921 Mohammad Lutfar Rahman put forward a very emotional plea for Bengali. He could bear any loss except that of his mother-tongue: "Who could possibly want to render my life so paralysed and powerless by making such a preposterous proposal? Who is it who advises me to weep in a foreign language? .... Though we may constantly

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42. Mohammad Akram Khan, op.cit. Attention may in this regard be drawn to the patronage of Bengali literature by Moslem Sultans in the early mediaeval period, when Brahmin Bundits were condemning anyone who heard the vernacular versions of the Rāmāyana or the 18 Purānas to the Hell of Rauraba. Moslem poets also began composing in Bengali as early as the 15th century. For details see Muhammad Enamul Haq, Muslim Bāmlā sāhitya, 1957, chapter III.

43. Editor, 'Bāṅgālā sāmāyik patre Mosalmāner sthān', Baṅga Nūr, 1st yr., 3rd no., Māgh, 1326 B.S. (1919).

44. Editor, 'Amāder kathā', Moslem Bhārat, 1st yr., 1st no.; Bāisākh, 1327, B.S. (1920).

hear the joyous laughter of Urdu from next door ... it brings us no genuine joy or comfort."<sup>45</sup> [italics mine]

Yet, nevertheless, even in 1930 Moyājjin lamented, "Though being raised in the lap of Bengal for many centuries and though they have heard Bengali from the lips of their mothers for age after age the Bengalee Moslems still have not learnt to love the Bengali language. Both the language and country still seem foreign to them ... Because of an abortive attempt to express our thoughts and to convey our emotions through Arabic, Persian and Urdu we have from the start neglected the opportunity to maintain our prestige in, and to establish our rights to our mother-tongue and its literature."<sup>46</sup>

Meanwhile Bengalee Moslems were still attacking the advocates of Urdu as the mother-tongue of Bengalee Moslems. In 1919 Bāṅgiyā-Musalmān-sāhitya-patrikā claimed that the Ulemā had a duty to cultivate their mother-tongue and disseminate religious knowledge through it. "For this reason Allāh sent to each nation as prophets native speakers of the languages of those nations. But most unfortunately our Ulemā still feel inhibited about showing sufficient loyalty to

45. Mohammad Lutfar Rahman, 'Urdu o Bāṅgālā Sāhitya', Bāṅgiyā-Musalmān-sāhitya-patrikā, 4th yr., 1st no; Bâisākh, 1328 B.S. (1921).

46. Abdul Majid B.A., 'Bāmlā bhāṣā o Musalmān', Moyājjin, 2nd yr., 9th-10th no.; Aṣārḥ-Śrābaṅ, 1337 B.S. (1930).

this eternal divine edict laid down by the Qorān<sup>47</sup>... What could be more regrettable than the fact that we now refuse to learn even our own mother-tongue?"<sup>48</sup>

In 1920 Nūr alleged that this "unnatural and false love of the Urdu language" was deterring Bengalee Moslems from getting educated via Bengali. "Unless we can dislodge Urdu from the soil of Bengal, the Bengali language will be unable to hold its head high in Bengalee Moslem society. No nation can ever hope to achieve its own welfare and salvation except by a vast and vigorous cultivation of its mother-tongue."<sup>49</sup> And in 1927 Sikhā quoting an 'Address' stated, "we hear that there are in Bengal many Moslems who feel ashamed or degraded in having to admit that their mother-tongue is Bengali. They claim that in order to qualify as aristocratic Moslems it is essential to change their mother-tongue." The speaker then goes on to ridicule the possibility of the 25 million Moslems of Bengal loading "on their shoulders their bedsteads, beddings, boxes, trunks and lands like Sindbad" and

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47. 'The preachers and preceptor; must impart religious instruction to their own nations via their mother-tongue.'
48. Mohamād Akram Khan, op.cit.
49. Editor, 'Bāṅgālā bhāṣār anādar', Nūr, 1st yr., 2nd-3rd no.; Fālgun-Cāitra, 1326 B.S. (1920).

emigrating so as to qualify as 'Sarif' (the noble or high caste) by settling in a land where Bengali is unknown.<sup>50</sup>

(ii) State language<sup>51</sup> and lingua franca

Summing up on the Urdu-Bengali controversy in regard to the mother-tongue Al-Eslām in 1917 wrote:-

"...That does not mean Bengalee Moslems should desist from learning Urdu ... it is extremely desirable that educated Bengalee Moslems should acquire a working knowledge of Urdu ... Hindu politicians are striving to introduce the Hindi language and the Nāgrī script [i.e. the script of the Hindi language] on the off-chance that it will become the State language throughout the whole of India when India

50. Tasadak Ahmad, 'Abhibhāṣan', Sikhā, 1st yr., Cāitra, 1333 B.S. (1927).

51. To obviate confusion, it might be well at this point to draw attention to distinctions in contemporary Bengalee Moslem terminology about the language problem. Rāṣṭra bhāṣā was usually used in the sense of 'State language' or 'Official language'. Occasionally, however, another term was used in this sense, namely rāj bhāṣā. These were both political terms referring to the actual or future official language in India. One other term deserves special comment, jātiya bhāṣā, 'national language'. Bengalee Moslems of this period on the whole regarded 'nation' as meaning 'world Moslem brotherhood'. Just as in mediaeval Europe people were conscious of belonging to Christendom - the Christian domains, so in Bengal during the period of our study many Bengalee Moslems consciously felt themselves to belong to a 'World Moslem brotherhood', which they called their 'nation' (jāti).

becomes self-governed.<sup>52</sup> Under these circumstances is it not the duty of Moslems to attempt to place upon the head of their own language and script [i.e. Urdu language and Arabic script] the prestigious crown of the future State language of India by disseminating it everywhere? Is it not inevitable that Moslems should desire Urdu to be both the future State language and lingua franca of India and that they should attempt to put this desire into effect?"<sup>53</sup>

In 1918 Al-Eslām proposed that Urdu could become a compulsory second language from the primary stage of education because of its value as a lingua franca and also because, if it were to become the State language, then this would place

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52. This refers to the Hindi-agitation, sponsored by such Hindu bodies as the Arya Samāj, the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, the All-India Common Script and Common Language Conference, the Nāgri Pracārini Sabhā, and the Hindu Mahā Sabhā. The movement assumed an all-India character, when Congress finally supported it. Distinguished Hindu leaders like Gokhale, Tilak, Malabya and Gandhi strove for its success. Moslems saw in it a threat of Hindi-expansionism. To them Hindi in the Nāgri script seemed to belong to Hindus alone and ipso facto opposed to Moslem culture. See also Donald Eugene Smith, India as a Secular State, 1963, pp. 398-99.

53. Manirazzaman Islamabadi, 'Baṅgiyā Mosalmān o Urdu samasyā', Al-Eslām, 3rd yr., 6th no.; Āsvīn 1324 B.S. (1917). The Hindi-Urdu controversy started as a 19th century dispute over the medium of instruction in some North Indian provinces. Tinged with communalism, it became, however, a political issue, Hindus identifying themselves with Hindi and Moslems with Urdu. Thus the advocacy of Urdu began partially to symbolise Moslem nationalism.

Bengalee Moslems "in a particularly strong position."

"As citizens of India and as Moslems it is ... essential that we learn Urdu."<sup>54</sup>

A little later Baṅgīya-Musalmān-sāhitya-patrikā carried views "about the necessity for a state language or lingua franca for the whole of India." It was stated that neither the heavily-Sanskritized Hindi advocated by "Hindu scholars from the North West" nor heavily Perso-Arabicized Urdu was suitable as the State language: a compromise approximating to the language "spoken by ordinary people" should be adopted.<sup>55</sup>

As regards Urdu itself, however, it was maintained that to foster and sustain a sense of nationhood amongst Moslems throughout India, Urdu, which was neither the mother-tongue nor the "national" language of Bengalee Moslems, nevertheless, had a vital role to play.<sup>56</sup>

In 1920 Moslem Bhārat put forward a further candidate for the position of lingua franca, namely English. Arguing

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54. Basarat Ali, 'Urdu samasyā', Al-Eslām, 4th yr., 8th no.; Agrahāyan, 1325 B.S. (1918).  
 55. Mohammad Akram Khan, op.cit.  
 56. Mohammad Akram Khan, ibid.

that for scientific and technical reasons English was indispensable, Moslem Bhārat maintained that no other language was as competent as English to be their lingua franca. "Since we can<sup>^ not</sup> absolutely give up English we should accept it not only mentally [as they had so far done] but publicly."<sup>57</sup>

(iii) Concepts of Nationality: the position of Arabic.

Arabic

As regards the position of Arabic, in 1919 an article in Baṅgīya-Musalmān-sāhitya-patrikā stated, "Whenever a Moslem thinks of the word 'Nation' he can never think of himself as being an inhabitant of Bengal, or indeed as merely an inhabitant of India. For the word 'Nation' brings him into contact with the whole world ... The bond of friendship, fellowship and love uniting Moslems throughout the whole world is the Qorān in Arabic. Our feeling of nationhood could never survive the severing of that bond." It was then argued that therefore neither Bengali nor Urdu could be regarded as the Bengalee Moslem national language:

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57. Mohammad Shahidullah M.A.B.L., 'Bhāratē sādharāṇ bhāṣā', Moslem Bhārat, 1st yr., 1st no.; Bâisākh, 1327 B.S. (1920).

that position could only be filled by Arabic; "it is necessary to give pride of place not to what we love [i.e. Bengali] but to what is best [i.e. Arabic]."58

The 'Abhibhāsan' (Address) quoted in the same issue alleged that "extremists" have now begun to call Bengali their "national" language. This was "absolutely illogical and dangerous to our community ... Moslem ideals in regard to nationhood are unique ... [they do] not derive from tribe, profession or country ... [but] solely from religion: Moslems throughout the world constitute one undivided and indivisible nation ... Their national language is Arabic ... [which] is the sole means of uniting Moslems throughout the world."59

The editor, however, refuted both these views in regard to the definition of nation. He took 'nation' in the English sense as "all the inhabitants of Bengal". "The universal feelings amongst Moslems throughout the world is much greater than this 'Nation'. We should call this 'universal brotherhood' of Moslems. Therefore, we can never

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58. Mohammad Wajed Ali, 'Bānlā bhāṣā o Musalmān sāhitya', Bānglīyā-Musalmān-sāhitya-patrikā, 1st yr; 4th no., Māgh, 1325 B.S. (1919).

59. Mohammad Akram Khan, op.cit.

agree to call Arabic our national language. It has always been our universal language (world language)."<sup>60</sup>

## II

### Bengali: Diction, Script and Style

#### (i) Diction.

In 1900 Nur-al-imān exhorted Bengalee Moslems to make the Bengali language 'suitable' for their own circumstances and times "instead of disliking it as a Hindu tongue".<sup>61</sup> Earlier its editor had published "a national book" (kaomī pustikā) called Dugdha sarobar (1891). Its style had reflected contemporary Bengalee Moslem speech. Commenting on this a Hindu journalist had wisecracked, "Hindus cannot touch milk boiled in a Moslem kitchen and so we are unable to savour this milk."<sup>62</sup> To avoid further adverse criticism of this kind Nur-al-imān set out to explain that as Moslems

60. Editorial comment, Bangīya-Musalmān-sāhitya-patrikā, 1st yr., 4th no.; Māgh, 1325 B.S. (1919).

61. 'Nur-al-imāner āpīl', op.cit.

62. Quoted in Nur-al-imān, 1st yr., 2nd no.; Śrāban, 1307 B.S. (1900).

they intended to use in their journal ordinary domestic Moslem speech arguing that even Isvarchandra Vidyasagar (1820-'91) had been unwilling to fetter "the tender child-like feet of the Bengali language" with cumbersome Sanskritic substitutes for natural Perso-Arabic diction, assimilated in Bengali.<sup>63</sup> Nur-al-imān might, therefore, put on the lovely tresses of the Bengali language "a garland of Busra roses", i.e. a linguistic embellishment of Perso-Arabic diction.<sup>64</sup>

What Nur-al-imān had done became clear in Bāsanā in 1909. Bāsanā stated that hundreds and hundreds of Perso-Arabic words were now current in Bengali speech.<sup>65</sup> They had no equivalent in "Pure Bengali" (Sādhu Bāmlā). They were an 'integral' part of the Bengali language and should be used in literature; i.e. the grammatical structure of literary Bengali should remain unchanged: merely its diction should be enriched with this Perso-Arabic element.<sup>66</sup>

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63. Nur-al-imān cites a few examples: 'Bādśā' (King) being replaced by 'Rājādhirāj cakrabartti', 'Darbār' (royal court) by 'Rājsabhā', 'Mej' (chair) by 'ucca kāsṭha mañca' and 'Bandobast' (arrangement) by 'āyojan'. - 'Bhāṣā samvande Nur-al-imāner kâfiyât', ibid.

64. Ibid.

65. According to Dr. S.K. Chatterji, present-day Bengali contains more than 2,500 Perso-Arabic words. - Bāmlā bhāṣā tattver bhumikā, 1936, p.137.

66. Hamed Ali, op.cit.

That is, Nur-al-imān had merely introduced into literature words which were already current in Bengalee Moslem speech. The controversy over Perso-Arabic diction centres on this simple point: should Perso-Arabic diction be granted literary status? According to the Moslem Press most Hindus were against this, and some Bengalee Moslems were in favour of a slightly stronger measure i.e. the introduction of new Perso-Arabic vocabulary.<sup>67</sup>

(a) The Hindu purist case as reflected in the Moslem Press

Hindus were apparently concerned to preserve the linguistic 'purity' of Bengali. For example, Al-Eslām observed in 1916, "... in their [Hindu] opinion, only Sanskrit words are entitled to enter Bengali. If words from other languages are allowed entry, the purity will be destroyed..."<sup>68</sup> (italics mine).

In 1916 Al-Eslām further reported that, "One sees in schools that the moment some pupil syas, 'I want a drink of Pāni [water],' every one bursts out laughing. They are obliged to say jal, which makes one think Moslems are speaking

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67. c f. "There are many other Arabic and Persian words which have not yet gained currency in the Bengali language ... and yet those words constitute the very language of our souls, and we absolutely need them." - Mohamād Ahabab Choudhury, 'Baṅga bhāṣār gati', Al-Eslām, 5th yr., 1st no.; Bāiśākh, 1326 B.S. (1919).
68. Shamsuddin Ahmad, 'Amāder sāhitya', Al-Eslām, 1st yr., 10th no.; Māgh, 1322 B.S. (1916).

a Hindu language, to which they themselves have no claim...."<sup>69</sup>

In 1918 Al-Eslām pointed out that, "Persian has lost its royal power, and so Hindu babus are now eager to rid the Bengali language of Persian words. The Arabic and Persian words which once supplied the decorative plaster in the construction of the Rāmāyana and Mahābhārata are now attracting unfavourable looks from many Hindus."<sup>70</sup>

In 1919 a complaint appeared in Bāṅgiya-Mūsalmān-sāhitya-patrikā that, "...Our distinguished men of letters [presumably Hindus] are advising us to evict such words as Allāh [God], Rasul [prophet], Namāz [prayer], and Rozā [fast]. The language, resulting from this eviction may be Sadhu [pure], but it would not be the mother-tongue of the Bengalee Moslems...."<sup>71</sup>

(b) The moderate Moslem case

Bengalee Moslems seemed caught between two stools. On the one hand, indifference to Bengali was alleged to be

69. Sheikh Habibar Rahman, 'Jātiya sāhitye Hindu Mūsalmān,' Al-Eslām, 2nd yr., 1st no.; Bâisākh, 1323 B.S. (1916). Both jal and pāni mean 'water', and both are of Sanskrit origin. Jal is, however, regarded as a Bengalee Hindu word, and pāni as Bengalee Moslem.

70. Ismail Hossain Siraji, 'Bāṅgālā bhāṣār paricaryā', Al-Eslām, 3rd yr., 10th no.; Māgh, 1324 B.S. (1918).

71. Mohammad Akram Khan, op.cit.

impeding their development as a community:<sup>72</sup> "Candidly speaking, the indifference of Moslems to the study of Bengali is one of the root causes of their decline." (Islām-pracārak, 8th yr., 11th no.).<sup>73</sup> (A similar idea was repeated in 1916 in Al-Eslām).<sup>74</sup> On the other hand, studying the Bengali language and its literature in its present form endangered their individuality. "...by reading literature full of Hindu ideals and Hindu sentiments Moslem society will gradually lose its individuality and assume a queer form." (Naba Nūr, 1903)<sup>75</sup>

Nevertheless, "...in order to live in Bengal, it is essential to learn the Bengali language." (Islām-pracārak, 8th yr., 11th no.)<sup>76</sup> (A similar idea was repeated in Al-Eslām, 1918).<sup>77</sup>

Bengalee Moslem society was, therefore, urged to consider the utility of Bengali - "Each of us Moslems must seriously consider, whether or not Bengali is the language of the courts, is a lucrative language, an effective language, the language of this country and our mother-tongue ... What harm is there

72. This alleged indifference was presumably due mainly to the 'objectionable' ideas in text books, fiction and drama by Bengalee Hindu authors.

73. Abdul Haq Choudhury, 'Musalmān sāmpradāy o tāhar patan'.

74. Shamsuddin Ahmad, op.cit.

75. Editor, 'Mātrbhāṣā o Baṅgiyā Musalmān', op.cit.

76. Abdul Haq Choudhury, op.cit.

77. Basarat Ali, op.cit.

in recognising the Bengali language as our mother-tongue?"  
(Islām-pracārak, 8th yr., 11th no.)<sup>78</sup>

Consequently, "...we can make for ourselves a separate stronghold in the Bengali language and it is now absolutely essential that we should do so ..." (Naba Nūr, 1903).<sup>79</sup>

The question was: how strong was their claim to Bengali and how far did they wish to modify the language?

The arguments put forward in answer to these questions between the years 1903 and 1923 may be summarised as follows: The claim of Bengalee Moslems to the Bengali language was equal to, if not greater than, that of the Hindus.<sup>80</sup> It was "a thousand times more useful to infuse Moslem spirit into the language than to waste energies attempting to make the language itself Moslem";<sup>81</sup> though infusing "Islamic ideals

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78. Abdul Haq Choudhury, op.cit.

79. Editor, 'Mātrbhāṣā o Bangiā Musalmān', op.cit.

80. "The Moslem Bengalees have a greater claim to the Bengali language than Hindu Bengalees" - Editor, 'Bibidha prasāṅga', Al-Eslām, 1st yr., 2nd no., Jyāaiṣṭha, 1322 B.S.(1915). "More than half of the speakers of Bengali are Moslems, and so it can never come about that they will grow indifferent to establishing their claim on Bengali." - Sheikh Habibar Rahman, op.cit. "Actually Bengali is the language of both Hindus and Moslems." - Abdul Malek Choudhury, op.cit. "...our ownership of the language is not less, but greater than that of the Hindus." - Ismail Hossain Siraji, op.cit.

81. Mohammad Yakub Ali Choudhury, op.cit.

and ideas" into Bengali literature would impregnate it with Perso-Arabic diction automatically;<sup>82</sup> for, hundreds and hundreds of Perso-Arabic words had already been "naturally and imperceptibly assimilated" in Bengalee Moslem speech,<sup>83</sup> "as a result of seven hundred years of Moslem rule."<sup>84</sup> Consequently, as Pandit Haraprasad Shastri<sup>85</sup> himself had admitted, Bengali was a mixed language;<sup>86</sup> Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian and English words were now current in it, either as embellishments or to satisfy "some deficiency in Bengali."<sup>87</sup> Such Perso-Arabic diction could not be abandoned;<sup>88</sup> its use was "habitual", not "forced" and "unnatural",<sup>89</sup> because of

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82. Syed Emdad Ali, op.cit.

83. Mohammad Akram Khan, op.cit.

84. Mohammad Ahabab Choudhury, op.cit.

85. Mahamahopadhyay Haraprasad Shastri (1853-1931), a noted linguist and a distinguished prose-writer, served as the Chairman of the Department of Bengali and Sanskrit in Dacca University. He collected many rare manuscripts from Nepal. One of his most outstanding contributions is the discovery and publication of Buddhist songs and dohās composed in old Bengali, Hājar bacharer puranā Bāmlā bhāṣāy Bāuddha gān o dohā (1916).

86. Shamsuddin Ahmad, op.cit.

87. Editor, 'Bibidha prasānga', Al-Eslām, op.cit.

88. Mohammad Ahabab Choudhury, op.cit.

89. Sheikh Habibar Rahman op.cit. and Editorial comment, Moslem Bhārat, 1st yr., 5th no.; Bhādra, 1327 B.S. (1900).

the need to discuss religion.<sup>90</sup> Indeed, many of these Perso-Arabic words had no equivalent in pure Hindu Bengali, e.g. Namā, Zākāt etc. Attempts to translate them with Sanskrit equivalents devitalised and distorted "the nations diction."<sup>91</sup> To drive them out would leave Bengalees "dumb".<sup>92</sup> Since, however, they were in any case already used in Bengali Literature, to exclude them would impair verisimilitude.<sup>93</sup> Therefore, their use was "unavoidable".<sup>94</sup> Nevertheless, no non-current Perso-Arabic words should be introduced, only elements "familiar" to both Bengalee Hindus and Moslems, which were "commonly understood".<sup>95</sup> No "deliberate" attempts would be made to introduce rare Perso-Arabic diction.<sup>96</sup> Any such obstinate attempts to introduce unnecessary Perso-Arabic diction was worthless.<sup>97</sup> Both Bengalee Hindus and Moslems had enriched, and could enrich,

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90. Syed Emdad Ali, op.cit.

91. Mohammad Ahab Choudhury, op.cit.

92. Mohammad Akram Khan, op.cit.

93. Editorial comment, Moslem Bharat, op.cit.

94. Editor, 'Bibidha prasāṅga', Al-Eslām, op.cit.

95. Shamsuddin Ahmad, op.cit., and Sheikh Habibar Rahman, op.cit.

96. Sheikh Habibar Rahman, ibid.

97. Mohammad Akram Khan, op.cit.

Bengali literature with their own cultural and religious vocabulary.<sup>98</sup> Bengalee Moslems understood Hindu religious terminology; they could not understand why Hindus refused to learn theirs.<sup>99</sup> Bengalee Moslems desired neither heavily-Sanskritized Vidyāsāgarī Bengali, nor Bengali "over-burdened ... with unnecessary words from Persian and Urdu."<sup>100</sup>

Up to about 1923 the Bengalee Moslem attitude appears to have been moderate and, indeed, concilliatory. Bengalee Moslems were prepared to admit that though Bengali literature contained much diction objectionable to them on religious grounds and though Vidyasagar's "making Bengali the daughter of Sanskrit" had halted Moslem Bengali literature "in mid-path",<sup>101</sup> it was nevertheless, Moslem apathy and indifference<sup>102</sup> that was responsible for the heavy Sanskritization of Bengali. After 1923, however, extremism appears to have entered the lists (presumably due to worsening of Hindu-Moslem relations

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98. Abdul Malek Choudhury, op.cit., and Ismail Hossain Siraji, op.cit.

99. Editorial comment, Moslem Bhārat, op.cit.

100. Abdul Malek Choudhury, op.cit.

101. Ismail Hossain Siraji, op.cit.

102. Abdul Malek Choudhury, op.cit.

after 1923-24).<sup>103</sup>

(c) Extremism

Where the extremist point of view came from and what it implied was brought out in an article in Islām-darśan in 1921 - "One class of Ulemā say that even those Arabic and Persian words which can be translated into simple Bengali intelligible to Hindus ought not to be translated but should be retained in the original Arabic or Persian form. Unless we retain them, our Islamic nationhood will be humiliated through fear of the Hindus. Consequently, there is a danger of this immersing us in great sin by denial of faith."

Islām-darśan regretted this, however, "There is no logical reason to suppose that the use of some Bengali term implies that we are either afraid of the Hindus or are trying to placate them ..."

After discussing specific examples of words, which could be regarded as offensive to Islam, Islām-darśan concluded: "...the greatest drawback is this that by abandoning such

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103. See chapters on Politics and Hindu-Moslem Relations.

terms as nandan kānan [garden of Eden], tridiba [heaven], sudhā [nectar], amiyā [ambrosia], mandār and pārijāt [two flowers of Eden] the Moslem poet would of necessity be reduced to despair sitting destitute and streaming in tears...."

Islām-darśan, therefore, sums up its attitude as:

"I am in favour of using all Bengali words and expressions. Nevertheless, there are some words which are directly contrary to Islamic belief ... Such expressions as 'bodhan nā haitei ki maṅgal ghaṭ bhāṅgiyā gela?' [has the auspicious vessel got broken before the invocation is complete?] can find no place in Islamic literature. We may use the term Iśvara or Parameśvara in the sense of Allāh but we can never use the term Maheśvara, for Maheśvara means Śiva alone."<sup>104</sup>

In 1923 Choltān, alleging that for the last 40 or 50 years Hindus had been driving Perso-Arabic diction from Bengali literature and heavily Sanskritizing it, claimed that this heavily-Sanskritized Bengali was "virtually a foreign language" to Bengalee Moslems and had no relation to

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104. Sheikh Habibar Rahman Sahitya ratna, 'Baṅga Sāhitye Islāmī savda', Islām-darśan, 2nd yr., 8th no.; Agrahāyaṇ, 1328 B.S. (1921).

"commonly-used" and "universally-understood" Bengali. It was better to enrich Bengali with Arabic, Persian, Urdu and English vocabulary. Choltān had no objection to concepts from Sanskrit literature, "when they serve a particular need," but "we object to making the Bengali language a second edition of Sanskrit."<sup>105</sup> The following month Choltān proposed that Bengali could be enriched from Urdu, Arabic and Persian as in the past and also from modern European languages, but "our literature will not be improved by searching out rare, incomprehensible Sanskrit words and forcibly inserting them in Bengali literature."<sup>106</sup> (Italics mine). Referring to this issue once more Choltān argued in August of that year that Arabic was a "heroic language" and Persian "exquisitely sweet, yet ..... very profound". Moslem imitators of Tagore were rendering Bengali "sickly and enfeebled.... To make Bengali strong, firm and heroic we must teach it to parade and manoeuvre on the field of battle astride a spirited Arabian stallion, bearing an unsheathed scimitar."<sup>107</sup>.

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105. 'Bāṅgālā bhāṣār gati', Choltān, 8th yr., 7th no.; 7th Aṣār, 1330 B.S.; 22nd June, 1923.
106. Editor, 'Bāṅgālā sāhitya o Hindu Mochalmān', Choltān, 8th yr., 9th no.; 21st Aṣār, 1330 B.S.; 6th July, 1923.
107. Ismail Hossain Siraji, 'Sāhityer prabhāb o prerāṇā', Choltān, 8th yr., 13th no.; 25th Śrābaṇ, 1330 B.S.; 10th August, 1923.

In December that year (1923) Choltān maintained,  
 "...it is a disgrace to Islam and to the Moslem nation to  
 write or speak words expressing idolatry..."<sup>108</sup> And in  
 1926 Raośan Hedāyet, reaching strongly to Hindu religious  
 terminology dogmatically maintained that it was "preferable  
 to use dobhāṣi<sup>109</sup>... rather than Hinduised Bengali. No article  
 containing such non-Islamic words as svarga [heaven], narak  
 [hell], yuga [era] ... will be published [in Raośan Hedāyet]  
 ....The main purpose of Raośan Hedāyet is to teach Islam ...  
 infidel speech ought not to be published."<sup>110</sup>

Condemning this attitude, Sāhityik in 1927 replied:  
 "There seems to be a kind of fanaticism ....tied up with  
 this use of Arabic or Urdu words in place of Bengali .... I  
 greatly dislike this latent sympathy for other languages and  
 these feelings of contempt and ignorant dislike of our own  
 Bengali language .... We have been held back in the field of  
 education for half a century already by religious fanaticism.  
 I only hope that this infatuation with Musalmāni Bengali <sup>111</sup>

108. Abduṣ Sattar Choudhury, 'Jātiyā bhāṣā o Choltān,'  
Choltān, 8th yr., 31st no.; 5th Pāuṣ, 1330 B.S.; 21st  
 December, 1923.

109. For dobhāṣi see chapter on Literature, p.220.

110. Editor, 'Lekhak lekhikāganer prati', Raośan hedāyet, 2nd  
 yr., 9th no.; Aśarh, 1333 B.S. (1926).

111. The term Musalmāni was coined by Rev. J. Long to mean a  
 particular mixed diction with elements drawn from Bengali,  
 Persian, Arabic, Turkish, Urdu, Hindi and Sanskrit,  
 especially as employed in dobhāṣi literature.

will not make us lose the path altogether."<sup>112</sup> (Italics mine.)

Whilst desiring moderation from their own side, and prepared to be conciliatory towards the Hindu predilection for Sanskrit, moderate Bengalee Moslems, nevertheless, desired an answering moderation in the Hindu camp. Choltān in 1923 wrote: "Probably no orthodox Hindu has a greater love and affection for Sanskrit than we have. Sanskrit is the world's most ancient language, the language of the world's most ancient text, the Vedas. It has a very close affinity with Arabic: the grammatical system of both languages rests upon the same rules and principles. We greatly encourage Moslems to learn Sanskrit. The Hindu philosophic texts are unique - in order to know and understand them and in order to acquire knowledge about education and civilization in those ancient times, it is essential to know Sanskrit. The monism which is the very foundation of Islam is incorporated in the Vedas - to appreciate this and thereby to establish the truth of Islam a knowledge of Sanskrit is absolutely essential. But we ought not to drag Sanskrit from its grave merely because it was an excellent language and we ought not to set it upon the seat of the living language of a living people.

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112. Mohammad Golam Mawla, 'Bāṅgālā sāhitya o Musalmān', Sāhityik, 1st yr., 11th no.; Āśvin, 1334 B.S. (1927).

And we ought not to search the burning grounds for charred bones in order to enrich Bengali literature with them. No impartial man of letters and no well-wisher of the Bengali language could wish it."<sup>113</sup>

Towards the end of our period, however, Moyājjin, in 1929 published an 'Address' which condemned extremism in both camps: "To one class of people Bengali means Sanskrit without the Anusvar and Visarga. Fortunately for Bengali that class has now almost disappeared. At the other extreme there is another group who understand by Bengali a wonderful mixture of Arabic, Persian, Urdu and Bengali ... It is absolutely necessary for us to save the Bengali language from both these groups. Only then can Bengali survive ... We desire living Bengali, not its ghost."<sup>114</sup>

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113. Editor, 'Bāṅgālā sāhitya o Hindu Mochalmān', op.cit. Choltān vacillated in regard to language. At times it praised Arabic as 'a heroic language' and Persian as 'exquisitely sweet'; and above it eulogised Sanskrit. Choltān was a vigorous Moslem national organ. Its praise of Arabic and Persian stemmed from this. It was also a champion of Congress and Hindu-Moslem political co-operation. Hence its conciliatory attitude towards Sanskrit, which other Moslem journals would have tended to dismiss as 'idolatrous'.
114. Dr. Mohammad Shahidullah, 'Abhibhāṣaṇ', Moyājjin, 2nd yr., 1st & 2nd no; Kārtik & Agrahāyaṇ, 1336 B.S. (1929).

(ii) Script(a) A proposal to write Bengali in the Arabic script<sup>115</sup>

In 1900 Nur-al-imān had promised to remedy the difficulties of reflecting 'exact pronunciation' of some Islamic words in Bengali.<sup>116</sup> In 1915 Al-Eslām proposed that if Bengali were "stylishly written" in the Arabic script, it would facilitate the mutual learning of Moslem languages and growth of "intimacy and affection amongst the people of Asia." Since Punjabi Moslems, who were numerically less than Bengalee Moslems, could keep intact their Urdu in its Arabic script and with its Perso-Arabic vocabulary, then Bengalee Moslems, who in some areas formed 80% of the population and possessed "such famous Moslem places as Islamabad, Sylhet, Dacca and Murshidabad," (it was inconceivable that) ~~they~~ would not be able to introduce the Arabic script for Bengali.<sup>117</sup>

Commenting on this article, in 1921 Islām-darśan condemned as impracticable the proposal made in the interests of world-wide Islamic unity to write "the Bengali language in the Arabic

115. This extremist proposal was probably in part a reaction to the propoganda in favour of Hindi in the Nāgrī script by the Nāgrī pracārini sabhā.

116. Editor, 'Bhāṣā samvande Nur-al-imāner kāifiyat', Nur-al-imān, 1st yr., 2nd no.; Śrāvaṇ, 1307 B.S. (1900).

117. Khademol Ensan, 'Bāṅgālir mātṛbhāṣā', Al-Eslām, 1st yr., 8th no.; Agrahāyaṇ, 1322 B.S. (1915).

script rather than in Hindu script."<sup>118</sup> Choltān, however, in 1923 disagreed and regarded it as disrespectful to distort Moslem vocabulary by writing it in anything but the Arabic script.<sup>119</sup>

In 1930 an article in Māsik Mohāmmadi again alluded to this question, bringing out a latent political significance. Māsik Mohāmmadi traced the backwardness of Moslems, in comparison to Hindus, in literature and education to "a single stroke of an English pen" by which in 1837 the Persian language was replaced by English.<sup>120</sup> Māsik Mohāmmadi

argued that as part of its alleged policy of 'divide and rule' the British had "tried to foster Hindu society at the expense of the Moslems ... Pandit Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar took this opportunity to introduce the Devanāgarī<sup>121</sup> script in place of Arabic and to establish idolatrous Hindu ideals in Bengali literature. The inhabitants of a country may regain their political independence ..... but once a nation has lost its

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118. Sheikh Habibar Rahman Sahityaratna, op.cit.

119. Abdus Sattar Choudhury, op.cit.

120. See chapter on Education. p.268

121. Devanāgarī, described as the script of deva bhāṣā (i.e. the language of the gods), is of the character in which Sanskrit is usually written.

cultural individuality there is no hope of its survival. In order to save Moslem Bengal it is necessary to save it via a revival of the Arabic script<sup>122</sup> and Islamic culture. The Irish nation regained its political independence by reviving the Gaelic language and Gaelic culture. The Moslems of Bengal have, by accepting the Devanāgarī script, become separated from Moslem culture throughout the world. This can be called cultural isolation."<sup>123</sup> The assumption that Bengali was, prior to Vidyāsagar, written in the Arabic script is false,<sup>124</sup> as also is the assumption that immediately after Plassey the British (East India Company) adopted a policy of 'divide and rule'.<sup>125</sup> Nevertheless, this article is important: it is concerned only partly with script, but mainly with independence and the importance of retaining

122. Though orthodox journals like Raṣan hedāyet, Moslem darpan, Sariyat and Sariyalē Eslām would presumably have welcomed the proposal to write Bengali in the Arabic script, none of them ventured to introduce the use themselves.

123. Mohammad Ahabab Choudhury Bidyabinode B.A., 'Kālcārer larāi', Māsik Mohāmmadi, 3rd yr., 12th no.; Āsvin, 1337 B.S. (1930).

124. A few mediaeval Bengali works were, however, transcribed in the Arabic script. For details see Munshi Abdul Karim Sahitya bisharad, Puthi-pariciti, 1958, p.169; and S.K. Chatterjī, The Origin and Development of Bengali Language, Vol. I, 1926, p.228.

125. Though it is possible that after the Mutiny (1857-58), Moslems were discriminated against and Hindus favoured by the British, before the Mutiny it would seem that Moslems enjoyed certain advantages: the first educational institution established under the auspices of the Company was for Moslems; and Moslem law officers were allowed to continue for more than a hundred years after the battle of Plassey (1757). See W.W.Hunter, Indian Musalmans, 1871, p.165.

cultural individuality for political reasons. There are strong feelings of Britain having deliberately harmed Bengalee Moslems in the interests of Hindus. These feelings may have been genuine in certain quarters of Bengalee Moslem Society. The mention of Ireland and of cultural revival being linked to the gaining of political independence is also important. For it shows how some Moslems were studying parallel cases in contemporary history and modelling their behaviour on that of other nations whose tactics had succeeded.

(b) Spelling and pronunciation

Between 1921 and 1930 several articles appeared on the spelling (i.e. transliteration and/or phonetic transcription) of Perso-Arabic words in Bengali. In 1921 Islām-darśan complained of the way Hindu authors "distorted Moslem names and words....[e.g.] 'Namāz' as 'Nemāj', 'Hādīs' as 'Hādīs', 'Paṅgambār' as 'Pyāgāmbār', 'Fātemā' as 'Fatimā', 'Āoraṅzeb' 'Āuraṅgīb', 'Sāhjāhān', as 'Sājihān', etc..." Apparently Moslems had on numerous occasions pointed out to Hindus errors of this kind but no notice had been taken. "One, therefore, feels inclined to ask - whether this is due to ignorance or deliberate intention."<sup>126</sup>

126. Editor, 'Sāhitye svecchācār', Islām-darśan, 2nd yr., 4th no.; Śrābaṅ, 1328 B.S.(1921).

Choltān on the same theme in 1923 alleged that highly-educated Moslems with B.As., M.As., and B.Ls., were equally guilty of such oppression to "their national vocabulary".<sup>127</sup> It then commented on mis-pronunciations resulting from the tendency to write dental 'sa' for Arabic and Persian 'śin'.<sup>128</sup> Continuing on the same theme the following year Choltān proposed to obviate this mis-pronunciation of Perso-Arabic words by transcribing the dental 's' in Arabic as 'cha' in Bengali, since 'cha' in Bengali is "throughout almost the whole of Bengal ... like the English 's'".<sup>129</sup> The editor of Māsik Mohāmmadī in 1930 ridiculed this tendency, however, citing the example Chahar Kalikātā (for 'Sahar Kalikātā' i.e., the city of Calcutta), arguing that in their "enthusiasm for their new-fangled opinions they [the 'newly initiated authors'] do not remember that in the original Arabic

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127. Editor, 'Arabī o Fārahī śabder Bāngālā bānān', Choltān, 8th yr., 6th no.; 32nd Jyāīṣṭha, 1330 B.S., 15th June, 1923.

128. "The character of 'sa' (s) ought actually to be pronounced like the Arabic letter 'chin'." ibid.

129. Editorial comment, Choltān, 8th yr., 43rd no.; 1st Cāitra, 1330 B.S., 14th March, 1924.

and Persian the word 'šahar' is written with 'šin'."<sup>130</sup>

This attempt to reflect faithfully in Bengali the pronunciation and spelling of original Persian and Arabic words may have seemed ridiculous to the editor of Māsik Mohāmmadī, but it was precisely the kind of thing that Hindu purists had been doing during the 19th century in Sanskritizing Bengali spelling. We do not know, however, whether this was what lay in the mind of Dr. Mohammad Shahidullah, when making the 'Presidential Address' reported in Saogāt in 1929, but it would seem that the proposals he was making for spelling-reform were directly contrary to the now-century-old Hindu practice of Sanskritizing Bengali spelling. "The

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130. Editor, 'Bānān bibhrāṭ', Māsik Mohāmmadī, 3rd yr., 10th no.; Srābaṇ, 1337 B.S. (1930). It may be of interest to quote the relevant excerpt in full: "As a reaction against the advocates of the dental 'sa' a new group of authors advocating the use of 'cha' has recently emerged ... The enthusiasm of this small band of newly initiated authors has grown so great that they do not hesitate in the least about writing 'Amṛtchar' in place of 'Amṛtsar'. The usual written form of the word 'šahar' is 'šahar'. And the word is undoubtedly of Arabic or Persian origin. Those new authors have heard that 'cha' ought to be used where dental 'sa' is generally used in transcribing Arabic and Persian words. Consequently they write 'Chahar Kalikātā'!"

terrible situation in regard to Bengali spelling has still not been remedied. There is a need for a large scale reform in that regard.<sup>131</sup> The two 'ba's in Sanskrit have become one in Bengali and indicate the way in which spelling-reform could be effected. The three sibilants; palatal, cerebral and dental, the two nasals; cerebral and dental, the 'bargīya ja' and the 'antastha ya' would similarly<sup>^to</sup> be replaced by single letters. Precedences for these spelling-reforms will be found in Pāli, Prākṛt and Apabhraṃśa .... It is not only the spelling that needs reforming but also the script. The conjunct characters are in many cases like chemical compounds .... For the present some arrangements ought to be made about the conjuncts."<sup>132</sup>

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131. Contemporary scholars and leading literary journals had long been discussing the need for spelling-reforms. Consequently in 1935 a spelling-reform Committee was instituted by Calcutta University. The present system of Bengali spelling is based upon the recommendations of that Committee.

132. Dr. Mohāmmad Shahidullah, M.A., B.L., D.Litt., 'Sabhāpatir Abhibhāsn', Saogāt, 6th yr., 10th no.; Bâisākh, 1336 B.S. (1929).

- (c) Comments on the emergence of 'Calitabhāṣā'<sup>133</sup>  
(i.e. colloquial style).

Between 1916 and 1928 a number of articles appeared commenting on the emergence of Calitabhāṣā as a literary style. Al-Eslām in 1916 condemned this attempt by "a group of sophisticated urban authors ('Bābu lekhaḥ')..... to promote regional dialect i.e. non-standard colloquial Bengali.....They are being led by Mr. Pramatha Choudhury alias Bīrbal Mahāśaḥ.<sup>134</sup> Where we use 'karitechi' [doing], they use 'karochi', 'karci', where we use 'kariyā' [having done], they use 'ka're' - etc. Do not they realise that if regional dialects become prevalent, then depending upon the regions words such as 'kartāchi' would be used in stead of 'karitechi', 'karbām' and 'karmu' in place of 'kariba', 'kairyā'

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133. Calita bhāṣā āndolon, i.e. movement to introduce the colloquial style in Bengali prose-composition, was initiated by Pramatha Choudhury (1868-1946) through his literary journal Sabujpatra (May, 1914). Hence it is also known as Bīrbalī āndolon (Bīrabalī movement) after Choudhury's pen name. The idea was to close up "the widening gulf between the language of the pen and the language of the tongue" by deposing sādhu bhāṣā (traditional literary language) from its literary pedestal. For details see Pramatha Choudhury, Prabandha saṅgraha, Vol. I, 1952, p. 303.
134. Pramatha Choudhury's conception of Calita bhāṣā was based on the sophisticated speech of Southern Bengal, i.e. 'daksin deśī bhāṣā', ibid., p. 316.

in place of 'kariyā' and 'karchyāla' in place of 'kariyāchila'? .... We can state categorically that if our language were to assume such forms then the colloquial language of Calcutta would not be intelligible in Chittagong and the people of Calcutta would understand nothing of the colloquial language in Sylhet ... There is no point whatsoever in aggravating linguistic confusion."<sup>135</sup> Islām-darśan wrote in the similar vein in 1921 - "We ought no longer to tolerate this unforgivable arbitrariness, perversity and waywardness in literature. Those who desire the welfare of Bengali language ought by castigating these trends with severe criticism and by punishing the offences of these undisciplined authors to regulate the Bengali language and preserve its purity, beauty and ideals. Needless to say we are equally opposed to both pedantic Bengali ['Panditī Bānglā'] and the Bengali of the

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135. Shamsuddin Ahmad, op.cit. It may be added that far more strongly-worded condemnations appeared in such contemporary journals as Sāhitya, Nārāyan and Upāsana. The new style (i.e. Birbalī bhāṣā) was labelled Kiṣkindhyār bhāṣā, i.e. 'language of the land of monkeys', Caṇḍalī bhāṣā, i.e. 'language of the low castes', and petnī bhāṣā, i.e. 'language of female ghosts.'

'green school' [i.e. that used in the Sabuj patra magazine] ... Even though it may not be desirable that our literature should be absolutely grey-haired, old and senile, nevertheless our needs and purposes cannot be fulfilled merely by a young and green literature."<sup>136</sup>

Māsik Mohāmmadi in 1928 questioned whether the writers of the so-called 'Pirāli<sup>137</sup> or Birballi school' were actually effecting any great change in the written language: "The only difference they make is, they give to the verb forms the shape of the spoken language in West Bengal...<sup>138</sup> Although this slight change has been effected .... through the influence of Rabindranath, nevertheless 75% of the dailies, weeklies and monthlies in Bengal all sing the predominance of the written language .... The attempt to introduce colloquial language is a mere temporary outburst which will disappear on the breast of time like a bubble ..."<sup>139</sup>

136. Mohammad Abdul Hakim, 'Baṅga bhāṣār adarśa', Islām-darśan, 2nd yr., 9th no.; Pāuṣ, 1328 B.S. (1921).
137. This refers to Rabindranath Tagore, Choudhury's fellow champion of calita bhāṣā. Tagore was a Pirāli Brahmin.—Prabhat Kumar Mukhopadhyay, Rabindra jibani, Vol.I, 1946, p.3.
138. This is an understatement. The difference was not confined to verb forms. The chief difference is actually syntactical. Sādhu bhāṣā was stiff and wooden, whereas calita bhāṣā, being based on a living, contemporary dialect, was more flexible.
139. Syed Emdad Ali, 'Bāmlā bhāṣā o Musalmān', Māsik Mohāmmadi, 1st yr., 6th no.; Cāitra, 1334 B.S. (1928).

That year a B.A. (Cantab.) Bar-at-law, S.Wajed Ali wrote, "Objectors say that various colloquial languages prevail in various parts of Bengal. Under such circumstances, would it not be unfair to accept as the literary language the colloquial language of one particular region? ... We have no alternative but to accept as our ideal language a particular one from amongst the various colloquials..." He then goes on to argue that no other colloquial is as widely understood as that of West Bengal which is in a very natural way being converted into the literary and spoken language of the educated throughout the whole of Bengal. Instead of deploring this or objecting to it, intellectuals ought to try to make this natural process quickly reach full maturity."<sup>140</sup>

Possibly the trend discernible here is that the more traditionally-minded Bengalee Moslems were clinging to the old established Sādhu bhāṣā (i.e. standard Bengali to be used in literary compositions) which was free from any regional predominance. Being educated, presumably in Calcutta

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140. S.Wajed Ali B.A. (Cantab.) Bar-at-Law, 'Bāngālī Musalmaner Sāhitya Samasyā', Māsik Mohāmmadī, 1st yr., 7th no.; Bāisākh, 1335<sub>H</sub> (1928).

University to start with, the B.A. (Cantab.) could probably foresee that as a result of Calcutta's predominance in education, culture, literature, the theatre, commerce and trade, its dialect was bound ultimately to become the dialect of Bengalee intellectuals and finally the foremost literary dialect.<sup>141</sup>

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141. This forecast has subsequently proved correct in regard to the literature of the whole of Bengal, East Pakistan included, in recent times.

## Chapter VIII

Society

In the first six chapters of this thesis, Bengalee Moslem society was seen to operate more or less in concert, due to a unity imposed upon it partly by external Hindu pressures, and partly by the coercion of its own orthodox religious leaders, who were determined to safeguard what they conceived to be Islam. Nevertheless, as we have seen, a more moderate wing of somewhat secular sentiments had begun to emerge. Then in the last chapter we saw Bengalee Moslem society divided not merely by degrees of orthodoxy, but also by differences of culture, class and language : the upper-class minority being Urdu-speakers and the remainder Bengali. The present chapter further explores the fissiparous tendencies and also the respective reaction of traditionalists and modernists towards the position of women.

## I

Fissiparous tendencies(i) Aristocrat and Commoner:<sup>1</sup>

Two journals, Islam-pracārak, and Al-Eslām, tended at

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1. There are two major social divisions in Bengalee Moslem Society: Āśraf and Atrāf. The former, descendants of Moslem immigrants, constitute the aristocracy. The latter, low-caste indigenous converts, constitute the commoners. See also Sir Herbert Risley, The People of India, 1915, p.122.

first to see the problem of social division in Bengalee Moslem society between aristocrat and commoner in Hindu terms. In the mid-19th century Hindus had campaigned against the evil effects of Kâulinya<sup>2</sup> (nobility of birth) in their society. Islām-pracāarak saw the Sarīfs (i.e. aristocrats) of Moslem Bengal as another manifestation of this Kâulinya and drew attention to the way in which, in the district of Barisal in East Bengal, Moslem aristocrats "when accepting a bride from a peasant family, or when giving in marriage one of their daughters to a lower class family [demanded] a 'marriage-settlement'." "Trading such as this", declared Islām-pracāarak, "is diametrically opposed to Islam."<sup>3</sup>

Al-Eslām (in 1919) inveighed against "the sense of Brahminhood amongst high-born Moslems", who regarded themselves as differing in every respect from commoners, as if they were a completely different species. Al-Eslām condemned their attempt to monopolise culture and education, denying such things to commoners "for fear that they may claim aristocratic status."<sup>4</sup>

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2. Kâulinya or 'Kulinism' was instituted amongst Rārhi and Vārendra Brahmins by King Vallal Sen in the 12th century. By the 19th century, however, it had degenerated into an oppressive form of polygamy. Isvarchandra Vidyasagar campaigned for its abolition.
  3. Editor, 'Samāj Kālimā', Islām-pracāarak, 2nd yr., 2nd no.; Jyāâiṣṭha, 1299 B.S. (1892).
  4. Mohammad Mayjar Rahman, 'Samāj citra', Al-Eslām, 5th yr., 5th no.; Bhādra, 1326 B.S. (1919).

The same year Al-Eslām again attacked the arrogance of aristocrats in Chittagong, whose sense of superiority gave rise to disputes over seating arrangements at weddings. These disputes sometimes lasted for one or two days and occasionally prevented "the meal and even the marriage from taking place." In parts of Murshidabad, Birbhum and Burdwan aristocrats regarded "commoners as even less than dogs and jackals." Al-Eslām roundly condemned such arrogance.<sup>5</sup>

Four years later in 1923 Sāmyabādi put forward a re-interpretation of aristocracy claiming that it derived not from birth or hereditary titles, but "from religious faith, knowledge and culture ... Aristocrats without religion and culture are, as it were, a disgrace and constitute the trash of society ... The blessings of God will descend from Heaven only when aristocrats and commoners, hunters, fishermen, weavers, oilmen, Sheikhs and Syeds<sup>6</sup> feel themselves to be united in common brotherhood by religion and knowledge."<sup>7</sup>

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5. Manirazzaman Islamabadi, 'Samāj saṃskār', Al-Eslām, 5th yr., 8th no.; Agraḥāyan, 1326 B.S. (1919).
  6. Sheikhs and Syeds constitute the top hereditary groupings in Bengalee Moslem society.
  7. Maolvi Shafiuddin Ahmad, 'Abhijātya gāurab', Sāmyabādi, 1st yr., 1st no.; Māgh, 1329 B.S. (1923).

Saogāt in 1928 openly attacked the Aśrāfs as a source of social disunity, condemning them as social parasites, who "regard working class people with contempt, because, instead of being social parasites, they feed and clothe themselves and their families on their own earnings. The 'Aśrāfs' in our country think it beneath them to work for a living."<sup>8</sup> Saogāt also condemned aristocrats for non-Islamic practices.

In the following year Saogāt continued its attack presenting a re-definition of aristocracy in favour of the educated, asking "in what sense are ... intelligent, educated, religious and cultured people from Moslem families born in Bengal inferior to the so-called aristocracy, which came here from abroad and is illiterate, uncultured and lacking in intellect?" (One sees here the seeds of Bengalee nationalism, which has only recently begun to advance towards maturity). For the moment, however, Saogāt avoided that issue and stated, "to me an 'Aśrāf' means a person of good taste and religious faith, who, having savoured culture,

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8. A.M.Torab Ali, 'Aśraf-Atrāf', Saogāt, 6th yr., 1st no.; Śrābaṇ, 1335 B.S. (1928).

disseminates it generously to others: all the rest are 'Atrāfs'. "9

Underlying each of these comments on aristocracy was the oft-repeated fear of Moslem society degenerating into two irrevocably-divided groups like the Hindus, segered by their concept of touchability, based on the impossibility of commensality and inter-marriage. Most far-sighted Moslems appear to have been determined to evade these twin pitfalls. The arrogance of the Aśraf seems, however, to have presented a perpetual danger. There were other dangers too, though.

(ii) The high-born and the low: the need for social integration.

It would seem that in Nadiya and the Twenty four parganas of Central Bengal low-caste Hindu converts to Islam failed to gain full acceptance in Moslem society and were even debarred from attending mass prayers. In North Bengal and Assam other occupational groups, the Bādiyās, Nikāris, and Māṭiyās<sup>10</sup> suffered the same fate.<sup>11</sup> The Abdāls and

9. Syed Emdad Ali, 'Aśraf-Atraf', Saogāt, 7th yr., 5th no.; Pāus, 1336 B.S. (1929).

10. Bādiyā - a gypsy community who trade in medicinal herbs and in sundry wares; Nikāri - fisherman; Māṭiyā - who trade in earth and clay.

11. Manirazzaman Islamabadi, op.cit.

Sāndars<sup>12</sup> were similarly discriminated against. Despite doing "almost everything in accordance with the Qorān Hadith" the Abdāls were forbidden to draw water from wells, and were treated almost like the Pāriyās<sup>13</sup> of Madras. The Ostās suffered similar discrimination, being debarred "from dining or mixing socially with our society", because of their profession (circumcision).<sup>14</sup> A trading community, the Sāndars also suffered similar social rejection, because of failing to observe Purdah (seclusion).<sup>15</sup> Making a spirited plea on their behalf, Sāmyabādī pointed out the danger of such discrimination: unless Moslem society took steps to assimilate these despised, occupational classes, they might be re-converted to Hinduism, "like the Mālkān Rajputs, [who have become Hindu]<sup>16</sup> via the Arya Samāj<sup>17</sup>....."<sup>18</sup>

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12. Abdāl - lime producer; Sāndār - trader in retail stationery goods.
  13. The Pāriyās are one of the lowest Hindu castes in South India.
  14. Maolvi Mohammad Jasmatullah, 'Abdāl o Ostā šrenīr kathā', Sāmyabādī, 1st yr., 3rd no.; Śrāban, 1330 B.S. (1923).
  15. Maolvi Ahsanullah, 'Sāndārder prati abicār', Sāmyabādī, 1st yr., 4th no.; Kārtik, 1330 B.S. (1923).
  16. Mālkān Rajputs, known also as Moslem Rajputs, are converted Hindus of Rajput, Jāt and Bāniyā descent in Agra and adjoining districts. The passage above refers to their re-conversion to Hinduism as a result of Suddhi movement round about 1920.
  17. A reformist organisation, founded by Svami Dayanand Sarasvati (1824-83) in 1875, the Arya Samāj had two principal mottoes: 'Back to the Vedas', and 'Aryāvarta for the Aryans.' See chapter on Hindu-Moslem Relations.
  18. Maolvi Mohammad Jasmatullah, op.cit.

(iii) The Western-Educated.

The western-educated came in for little praise and much abuse. Nur-al-imān first mentioned them in 1900 as playing a valuable social role as the spokesman for Moslem society in official circles - "If government officials from abroad, who speak a different language and believe in a different religion, suddenly and unwittingly attempt to harm Moslems by introducing prejudicial legislation, then it is these people who put those officials right, and by averting trouble earn the thanks of both king and subject. It is these people who organise and guide the various committees and associations which benefit our country-men ... it was they who first realised that all the evils of the Moslem community could automatically be removed, provided Moslems could achieve educational progress."<sup>20</sup>

This panegyric had a sting in its tail for it ended with a prayer that "they may be free from all vices." Presumably this prayer failed, for from then on the Moslem Press

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19. For comments on western-educated, see also chapter on Education.

20. Editor, 'Hemāyete Eslām', Nur-al-imān, 1st yr., 2nd no.; Šrābaṅ, 1307 B.S. (1900).

had nothing but abuse for the western-educated class. Naba Nur in 1903 points out that educated Moslems in high official positions squandered all their earnings on foreign ostentation: "Dawson's shoes and Laidlaw's bodices, jackets and golden jewellery ... No other community exhibits such selfish, ungrateful, self-indulgent spend-thrifts." Apparently many such Moslems had achieved their advancement on grants from Haji Muhammad Muhsin,<sup>21</sup> but none of them now seemed eager to repay this debt by contributing towards the education of other poor Moslem students. "O you ungrateful Moslem magistrates and lawyers," Naba Nur cried, "do you not realise the extent of your debt and are you not prepared to repay it?"<sup>22</sup>

A year later Kohinur lambasted the western-educated for being "half Hindu and half European", crying, "you are Moslems. Why do you dress up in this odd attire, when you possess such beautiful clothes of your own?"<sup>23</sup> Islām-

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21. Haji Muhammad Muhsin (1732-1812) is well-known in Moslem Bengal as a benefactor of education and learning. His endowments established the Hooghly Muhsin College and founded the famous 'Muhsin Scholarships', which helped in raising an English-educated Bengalee Moslem society.
  22. Aziz Meser, 'Siksita Musalmāner phato', Naba Nur, 1st yr., 3rd no.; Asārāh, 1310 B.S. (1903).
  23. Sheikh Fazial Karim, 'Dharmmahinatā o Samāj Samskār,' Kohinur, 5th yr., 3rd no.; Asārāh, 1311 B.S. (1904).

pracārak continued the attack, accusing the western-educated of ignorance of their religion, of a failure to perform Namāz and Rozā, of being unable to speak Urdu<sup>24</sup> and of disdaining to listen to the advice of 'Maolvis' (persons educated in Islamic religion) "out of conceit and for fear of slighting their new science." Indeed, the western-educated were so backward in religious instruction that even in their presence the Khuṭbā (book of sermon) often had to be read by less well-educated individuals.<sup>25</sup>

During the next eighteen years this theme of the aping of western dress and the semi-atheism of the western-educated was to gain more and more momentum. It appeared in Islām-pracārak in January, 1908 (Māgh, 1314 B.S.), in Al-Eslām in June, 1919 (Aṣārḥ, 1326 B.S.) and again in January, 1920 (Māgh, 1326, B.S.), in Islam-darśan in May, 1920 (Jyāiṣṭha, 1327 B.S.), in Al-Eslām once more in July, 1920 (Śrāban, 1327 B.S.), in Choltān in April, 1924 (Cāitra, 1330 B.S.), once more in Islām-darśan in September, 1925

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24. Until recently the Bengalee Moslem élite was supposed to converse in Urdu. See chapter on Language.

25. Aftabuddin Ahmad, 'Baṅgiya Musalmānēh Sikṣā', Islām-pracārak, 6th yr., 3rd no.; Aṣārḥ, 1311 B.S. (1904).

(Āśvin, 1332 B.S.) and in Moslem darpan in January, 1926. The western-educated were criticised for: shaving the face as "smooth as a woman's"; dressing the hair in the "Oriya fashion"; being bare-headed instead of wearing the cap; and abandoning 'Moslem dress'. Islām-pracārak put forward an interesting argument, explaining why the semi-educated Hindus. Through seeing Hindus so advanced economically, professionally and culturally, and so respected in society, whilst Moslems were confined mainly to menial employment, the semi-educated concluded, "Hindus are the bossess and we are the servants .... the Hindus are advanced .... We are born to execute their orders ... and put up with their high-handedness ... "26

Islām-pracārak continued, "In these circumstances they feel compelled to regard Hindus as cultured, well-bred and advanced. In consequence they easily assume the Hindu style of dress. Moslems of this type long to become bābus by imitating Hindu bābus ..... But the Hindu bābus continue to regard them with contempt - for contact with them spoils

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26. Ebne Ma'az, 'Bhāi Musalmān jāga', Islām-pracārak, 8th yr., 8th no.; Māgh, 1314 B.S. (1908).

the water in the Bābu's hookās and contact with 'Neres'<sup>27</sup> desecrates their bodies and bedding ... Many Moslems cut off their beards in the hope of becoming 'bhadra lok' [gentle folk] and grow long moustaches. To see them it is difficult to tell that they are Moslem .. Even in their speech mannerisms they express the same Hinduisation and they deliberately try to conceal the fact that they are Moslem. They long to be able to get a little space on the corner of the Bābu's carpet and think themselves lucky to be able to attend the Bābu's musical evenings ... Many of them screw up their noses at the mention of eating beef and pull faces when they hear of widow-remarriage. Many of them do not hesitate even to mock religious Moslems dressed in Lungis as 'Mullāji' or 'Kāth Mullā'. Many of these rascals ridicule the Ulemā in turbans as large basket-carrying porters .... This is the picture of our educated people."<sup>28</sup>

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27. Nere or Nerā means 'shaven-headed ones'. It was first applied to Buddhists, then Vaishnavites and Moslems. It is pejorative.
28. Ebne Ma'az, op.cit. This comment reminds one very much of the attitude of orthodox Hindu society towards iconoclastic Young Bengal in the 1830s, and also of the Bābu theme in the satirical sketches of Bhabani Charan Bandyopadhyay. Here the situation is reversed, instead of ignorant rich Hindus aping Moslem manners, we get a picture of semi-educated Moslems yearning to identify themselves as Hindu bābus and adopting a contemptuous, sarcastic attitude towards Mullās.

A satirical picture of the western-educated, strongly reminiscent of the bābu theme in mid-19th century Hindu Bengali literature, was presented by Mohammad Shahidullah in Al-Eslām - "How deeply regrettable! Our educated young men seem to regard religion as completely unnecessary. Look at that young gentleman; his face is clean-shaven and smooth as a woman's; he is wearing on his nose a pair of unnecessary artificial eyes; his hair is dressed in the Oriya fashion; and he is wearing a coat and dhuti in the Bengalee Hindu manner. Can you recognise what he is? Please do not ask him his name. That would embarrass him exceedingly. Only by enquiring into his parentage can you identify him as a Moslem .... Alas! are such young men the basis of our future hopes and aspirations? ... What can you expect to find inside him, when his outside is so non-Moslem?"<sup>29</sup>

Even the eating habits and recreations of the western-educated were attacked. "Educated society, when dining, has, in imitation of the English adopted knives, forks and

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29. Mohammad Shahidullah, 'Abhibhāsan', Al-Eslām, 5th yr., 3rd no.; Aṣār, 1326 B.S. (1919).

spoons instead of hands, and tables and chairs instead of faraś [carpet], and the smoking of cigars and cigarettes instead of hookās and tobacco."<sup>30</sup>

According to Islām-darśan, not only were educated Moslem males dressing up "like any Hindu Ram, Syam, Jadu or Madhu," but also Moslem girls of good family were now rejecting traditional Moslem dress in favour of "fine, semi-transparent śāris from Farasdanga". They were modelling themselves apparently upon Hindu novel-heroines "Ashalata, Premlata, Anupama and Nirupama. But alas! ... they have managed only to assume the clothing, and failed to absorb anything more from these models."<sup>31</sup>

One of the main points of contention seems to have been the cap. Choltān avered that the cap was obligatory on virtually all occasions; "indeed, even when going to the lavatory",<sup>32</sup> and in another article that "the newly-educated have become the arch enemies of the cap ... Every-

30. Farrokh Ahmad Nejampuri, 'Sahityer gati', Al-Eslām, 6th yr., 4th no.; Śrābaṇ, 1327 B.S. (1920).

31. Eshak Mian, 'Mosalmān chātrēr Hindu bhāb', Islām-darśan, 5th yr., 1st no.; Āśvin, 1332 B.S. (1925).

32. Mohammad Shamuẖ aman Islamabadi, 'Bāmlār Mochalmān', Choltān, 8th yr., 8th no.; 14th Āṣārh, 1330 B.S., 29th June, 1923.

where the dhuti [primarily Hindu dress] has ousted āckān, pājāmā and lungi [these are claimed to be Moslem dress], and the plight of the cap does not bear thinking of." Choltān suggested that it was time Moslem religious teachers exerted their moral influence in a holy campaign "to re-introduce into society our cap and national costume."<sup>33</sup>

By January, 1926, however, the position remained unchanged. Moslem young men in general were adopting the fashions of their Hindu fellow-students, abandoning moustaches and beards, wearing fine dhutis and pānjābis and creating "in sophisticated male society the illusion of being women", whilst the highly-educated were dressing like Europeans "in hats, coats and neckties".<sup>34</sup>

Obviously highly-educated and semi-educated Moslems had become a source of intense irritation to orthodox Moslems. "... the fantastic appearance of our semi-educated, slightly-educated and boys still at school makes our readers hang their heads in shame. Furthermore, these cultured people [obviously modern] ridicule Sufis, Mullās - Musullīs [i.e. orthodox teachers] who sport long beards without

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33. Editor, 'Jātiyā poṣāk', Choltān, 8th yr., 46th no.; 22nd Caitra, 1330 B.S.; 4th April, 1924.  
 34. Mohammad Iliyas, 'Bāṅgālī Musalmān', Moslem darpan, 2nd yr., 1st no.; January, 1926

moustaches and do not exhibit the now fashionable dhuti."<sup>35</sup>

This discussion of the western-educated in the Moslem vernacular Press was entirely one-sided. It presented merely the orthodox point of view. Orthodox Moslems clearly held in their mind's eye a picture of the ideal Moslem; whose face bore no moustache but a beard of specified length; whose hair was dressed in traditional Moslem fashion; and who wore the Moslem dress introduced into Bengal by the Turks, Pathans and Mughals. The orthodox saw no reason why a man educated in English should not remain Moslem in every other respect: "Is the aim of the education of our English-knowing brethren mere slavery, mere bootlicking, mere flattery? . . . . No, never. A person, despite English education, can become religious, patriotic, moral and independent-minded. The examples being such people as the great Tilak, Mahatma Gandhi and the late Gokhale. But why are such examples missing from the present-day Moslem community?"<sup>36</sup>

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35. Ibid.

36. M.A.Wahed, 'Moslem samājer Lakṣa bhrastatā', Al-Eslām, 5th yr., 10th no.; Māgh, 1326 B.S. (1920).

## II

The position of women<sup>37</sup>(i) Female emancipation.<sup>37</sup>

The position of women was first raised in our period by Pracārak in January, 1900 (Māgh, 1306 B.S.), when it pleaded for their emancipation on the grounds that "the cause of Islam's present plight is the neglect and contempt we show to our women-folk in contravention of scriptural edicts."<sup>38</sup>

The issue continued to be aired with increasing clamour during the next three decades in such journals as Naba Nūr, Kohinur, Al-Eslām, Bāngīyā-Musalmān-sāhitya-patrikā, Moslem Bhārat, Sahacar, Sāmyabādī, Nārī-śakti, Sikhā, Saogāt, Moyājīn, Māsik Mohāmmadī and so forth.<sup>39</sup>

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37. These campaigns in the Moslem press during our period to ameliorate the position of woman are comparable to those which occurred in Hindu society in the mid-19th century, when such people as Vidyasagar strove to abolish polygamy and introduce widow-remarriage.
38. S.O.Ali, 'Ramānī', Pracārak, Māgh, 1306 B.S. (1900).
39. Concurrently with these press campaigns to improve the position of woman by the abolition of polygamy, Purdāh and early marriage, the regulation of divorce, and the promotion of widow-remarriage, country-wide organizations like the All-India Moslem Ladies' Conference, founded in 1914, also strove for the same objectives.

In 1928 Moyājjin protested violently against the treatment of women, claiming "chains of subjection and disgrace", in which women-folk were kept, were the direct opposite of the "freedom and dignity" granted them by the Islamic religion. "The way that a woman is given in marriage in Bengalee Moslem society is exactly the same as a domestic pet is taken to market with a rope round its neck." Moyājjin then went on to censure the "arbitrary manner" and "injustice" and "animal-like treatment" which characterized marriages in Moslem society. These were settled by the guardian, without consulting the bride, and without regard for her future happiness.<sup>40</sup>

The issue of Female emancipation was pursued the following year (in 1929) by Saogāt, which argued that chastity and freedom were not incompatible: "What value has the word 'chaste' [sati] when applied to a woman confined ... behind bolted doors and windows? ..... Moslem scriptures do not entitle us to keep women in cages .... women ought to enjoy the freedom to become educated, attain their rights and manage their own affairs, by judging for themselves what is good and what is bad."<sup>41</sup>

40. 'Baṅga Moslem samāje mahilā jīban', Moyājjin, 1st yr., 2nd no.; Śrābaṅ, 1335, B.S. (1928)

41. 'Muslim nārīr mūlya', Saogāt, 7th yr., 1st no.; Bhādra, 1336 B.S. (1929).

In that same issue of Saogāt, Mrs. M. Rahman spiritedly demanded "the rights due to us according to our religion ... Islam did not specify that we should be confined within prison walls, or should remain household furnishings like lifeless dolls. It ordained that we had a clear duty to acquire knowledge. We are partners in Islam, auxiliaries on the field of battle ... What little justice do we get by Islamic law? To what other use are we able to put the Kābin [Marriage deed - a document granting certain rights to Moslem women], except perhaps, if need be, to light the stove with it?"<sup>42</sup>

Another woman, Ayesha Ahmad, in that same issue of Saogāt pleaded for emancipation. Tired of being "helpless" "like lifeless dolls and dependent on others", she desired like Hindu women to climb "the ladder of advancement", blaming Purdāh for the backwardness of Moslem women. She declared, "Chastity is an inner thing and its preservation requires mental faculties, a sense of duty and the power to discriminate between good and bad. These faculties can be fully developed through education." She then alleged Moslem

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42. Mrs. M. Rahman, 'Pardā banām prabañcanā', Ibid.

social practices, especially child marriage and premature motherhood, impeded the development of women's potentialities. Both practices needed banning as soon as possible. She saw no indignity in ladies earning a genteel living independently, and free from being married off "to unworthy or undesirable grooms."<sup>43</sup>

(ii) Early marriage.

One of the "chief impediments to the emancipation and education of women" was "early marriage". This issue was raised by Al-Eslām in 1917. It argued that early marriage was "more harmful to girls" than to boys, for it deprived them "of the freedom and joy natural to childhood" and impeded their development. Furthermore, it disrupted their studies and exposed them to premature pregnancy: such pregnancies resulted in weak children and racial decline. Furthermore, upon attaining maturity married couples often discovered they were incompatible.<sup>44</sup>

Two years later Al-Eslām again attacked early marriage

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43. Ayesha Ahmad, 'Muslim samāje unnatir antarāy', ibid.

44. Ismail Hossain Siraji, 'Nārī jātir durgati', Al-Eslām, 3rd yr., 5th no.; Bhādra, 1324 B.S. (1917).

on both "medical and economic grounds", claiming boys ought not to marry till economically mature.<sup>45</sup> A month later it claimed, "the most scientifically approved method of marriage is for the bride and groom to select each other upon attaining maturity." This method accorded with Islamic principles. Marriage disrupted studies and was therefore inadvisable "for young men ... before the age of 23 or 24 and for girls before 14 or 15."<sup>46</sup>

In 1928 a draft bill to determine the age of marriage was under discussion in the Indian legislature. The bill said, it would be a punishable offence to give in marriage boys under 18 years of age and girls under 14. This was seen by Māsik Mohāmmadī to accord with Islamic principles: the Ijāb-Kabul (voluntary mutual consent given at the time of marriage) implied that both bride and groom were mature; otherwise "according to Sariyat law, the consent of an immature boy or girl is invalid."<sup>47</sup>

Moyājjin, however, took a contrary view - "If this

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45. Manirazzaman Islamabadi; 'Samāj samskār', Al-Eslām, 5th yr., 6th no.; ĀṣṢir, 1326 B.S. (1919).  
 46. Ismail Hossain Siraji, 'Bibāha niti,' Al-Eslām, 5th yr., 7th no.; Kārtik, 1326 B.S. (1919).  
 47. Editor, 'Bibāher bayās nirdhāran', Māsik Mohāmmadī, 1st yr., 7th no., Bāisākh, 1335 B.S. (1928).

draft bill is passed, the religions and people of this country will be seriously harmed." It, therefore, praised Khan Bahadur Maolvi Kajemuddin Sahib, an influential zemindar of Baliyadi, Dacca, for protesting against it. Moyajjin felt that the government had "arbitrarily included in its legal provisions only the few" Sariyat principles... "that it thought best". Moyajjin contended that "all the provisions of the Sariyat" should be included.<sup>48</sup>

Commenting upon the passage of this Act (Sarda Act)<sup>49</sup> the following year, Moyajjin in an editorial predicted that "from the very moment that this law comes into effect society will be plagued with indescribably horrid immoral practices." It then called upon Moslems to campaign to get the Act rescinded.<sup>50</sup>

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48. Editor, 'Bibaha āin samskār', Moyajjin, 1st yr., 2nd no.; Śrāban, 1335 B.S. (1928).
49. The Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929, popularly called the Sarda Act after the name of its sponsor, Rai Sahib Harbilas Sarda.
50. "It is now our social duty to hold meetings everywhere, and by protesting against this law to bring all powers together to annul it." - Moyajjin, 2nd yr., 1st & 2nd nos., Kārtik and Agrahāyan, 1336 B.S. (1929). Compare this attitude of Moyajjin to its idea regarding 'Female emancipation' on page 390. It will be seen that here it has switched from a liberal, progressive viewpoint to a reactionary orthodox one. This kind of change of face is typical of some sections of the Moselm press during this period.

Such a campaign was, indeed, launched.<sup>51</sup> Three months later in Sariyate Eslām a ballad appeared condemning the Act:

"We will never obey the Act of Sarda,  
 If it comes into effect immorality will increase,  
 Sin will spread, and there will be no  
 respectability left,  
 We will never obey the Act of Sarda.

... ..

We humbly entreat to the Governor General  
 To rescind this Act without delay -  
 We do not want the Act of Sarda."<sup>52</sup>

Thus over this issue two diametrically-opposed viewpoints emerged: one, that of the humanitarians, who based their case on psychological and genetic criteria, though, generally, also claiming scriptural support; and two, the orthodox viewpoint, which stressed the moral aspect,

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51. The orthodox Maolanās (same as the conservative Hindus) launched a large-scale campaign against the Act. They demanded that Moslems be excluded from the Act's jurisdiction, because Islamic scriptures did not restrict early marriage. Even great political leaders like Maolana Mohammad Ali prophesied the Act would rouse 70 million Moslems to open revolt. See M. Mujeeb, The Indian Muslims, 1967, p.539.

52. Dewan Shamsuddin Ahmad Nitpuri, 'Sardār Sardā āin', Sariyate Eslām, 5th yr., 2nd no.; Fālgun, 1336 B.S. (1930).

fearing that post-pubic marriage would leave a loophole for fornication.

(iii) Widow re-marriage.

In 1898 Kohinur deplored the fact that most Moslems in north India, west of Calcutta both within Bengal and without, "do not practice widow re-marriage". It claimed that the Prophet Mohammad by personal example had indicated the path in this respect and urged the Ulemā to do all in their power to counter this deep-rooted aversion to widow re-marriage, which, it said, derived from Hindu influence.<sup>53</sup>

(iv) Marriage abuses: ill-treatment of wives

(a) Polygamy

In 1903 Islām-pracārak attacked polygamy<sup>54</sup> as giving rise to intolerable distress to ladies of good family and leading to suicide by "poison, hanging, opium or other means."

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53. Mohammad Reyajuddin Ahmad, 'Moslem samāj Samskār', Kohinur, 1st yr., 1st no.; Aṣār, 1305 B.S. (1898).

54. The western-educated had been attacking polygamy since about 1890. c. f. Syed Ameer Ali's statement in 1891: "Polygamy in the present day is an adulterous connexion, and is contrary to the spirit of Islam." - Quoted by Murray T. Titus, Indian Islam, 1930, p.213.

Apparently the combination of "tyrannical husabnds" and "disgraceful, fiendish co-wives" proved too much for them. Islām-pracāarak no longer saw any political or religious justification for polygamy: it had apparently first started as a means of increasing Moslem power and spreading Islam; but "at present Moslems practice polygamy solely to serve their passions". The increased-birth rate, resulting from it, was now impoverishing Moslems and keeping them "uneducated and uncultured". Polygamy ought, therefore, to be abolished.<sup>55</sup>

Naba Nūr in 1905 alleged that polygamy "was not originally ordained by the scriptures": it had been instituted by priests merely to serve their own economic interests, as also had the practice of keeping bonds-women.<sup>56</sup>

By 1926-27 polygamy had fallen into such disrepute that indulgence in it by "aristocratic and semi-aristocratic families" had become the subject of scurrilous newspaper articles and was linked by Śikhā with the increasing tendency

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55. Sheikh Jamiruddin, 'Musalmān samāje strī jātir prati bhīṣaṇ atyācār', Islām-pracāarak, 5th yr., 7-8th no.: Srāban-Bhādra, 1310 B.S. (1903).
56. Maolvi Imdadul Haq B.A., 'Bahu bibāha', Naba Nūr, 3rd yr., 8th no.; Agrahāyaṇ, 1312 B.S. (1905).

of profligate Moslems to marry loose Hindu women. "Can such loose women ever become mothers of strong, intelligent, educated and virtuous children? ... We do not .... possess the resources to increase our social burden by importing depraved men and women from outside."<sup>57</sup>

(b) Ill treatment and divorce

Al-Eslām in 1919 alleged that it was common practice for men "to beat or torture their wives simply because there was either too much or too little salt in the curry; indeed, they do not even hesitate to divorce their wives for trivial reasons."<sup>58</sup>

The same theme had been raised about a decade earlier by Islām-pracāra, which had stated: "Moslems now-a-days regard their wives as part of their immovable property." They frequently divorced them<sup>59</sup> "in the hope of getting a better looking one, on whom to satisfy their low, animal passions." This kind of behaviour was "not countenanced by the Qorān, Hādīth and Fiq ".<sup>60</sup>

57. Anwarul Kadir, 'Bāngālī Musalmāner sāmājīk galad', Sikhā, 1st yr., Cāitra, 1333 B.S. (1927).

58. Manirazzaman Islamabadi, op.cit.

59. C f. S.Khuda Baksh's statement in 1912: "In Eastern Bengal divorce is the order of the day, and wives are put away as we cast off our old clothes." - Quoted by Murray T. Titus, op.cit., p.214.

60. Mohammad K.Chand, 'Tālāk bā Moslem strī barjan', Islām-pracāra, 8th yr., 12th no.

By 1927 attitudes to divorce and polygamy had presumably so hardened that Māsik Mohāmmadī could describe as "misconceptions" the wide-spread belief that men had an "unconditional and unregulated right to take more than one wife", and were "not obliged to observe any rules or regulations regarding their right to divorce". These misconceptions were, Māsik Mohāmmadī alleged, created by "those claiming to monopolize religious affairs." Māsik Mohāmmadī suggested that legislation be introduced to regulate marriage laws as in Egypt, and called upon the Muslim League, the Jamiyate Ulemā and other Moslem organizations to attend to the matter.<sup>61</sup>

(c) Dowries ('Mahar')

In 1919 Al-Eslām attributed the ruin of numerous semindaries and landed estates to excessive demands as 'Mahar' from the groom's family and called upon the Ulemā and Fazils (scholars) to eradicate these evils.<sup>62</sup> The same article condemned ostentatious weddings with "fireworks, singing, dancing, band and drum parties". These too

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61. Mohāmmad Akram Khan, 'Eslāme nārīr maryādā o adhikār', Māsik Mohāmmadī, 1st yr., 3rd no.; Pāṣ, 1334 B.S.(1927).  
 62. Manirazzaman Islamabadi, op.cit.

impoverished the whole of Moslem society and were "forbidden by Islam."

In 1924 Sāmyabādi alleged that the practice of demanding bride-or groom-prices had penetrated Moslem society in imitation of Hindus. Efforts had been made by Ulemā to eradicate it, but without avail. The craze for dowries was also spreading. The moment a man's son got "a little education, or the moment anyone begins to feel ... superior in family prestige, he expects the father of his future daughter-in-law to give the boy cash and the girl jewellery and so forth." These practices needed nipping in the bud; otherwise their consequences would be deadly.<sup>63</sup>

(v) Purdāh

(a) In favour

In 1903 Islām-pracārak saw Purdāh as safe-guarding family honour and ensuring the orderly running of households; as neither a manifestation of "male suspiciousness", nor a source of "mental distress and discomfort to women". On the contrary, Purdāh enhanced the dignity of women and saved

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63. Editor, 'Bibāhe barpan', Sāmyabādi, 2nd yr., 4th & 5th no.; Asārh o Bhādra, 1331 B.S. (1924).

them from rough, out-door work. "To compare this beautiful, praiseworthy system with imprisonment is nothing more than kicking at the head of truth and justice and proving oneself ignorant and insane. All the cries for female emancipation and female education, and all the protests against Purdāh are nothing but the ravings of a lunatic."<sup>64</sup>

Two years later, commenting on the attendance at the Provincial Moslem Education Conference of Mrs. Aziz Sahiba, "a new Moslem convert from Liverpool" (presumably European) and wife of a Lucknow barrister, Islām-pracārak signed, "it would have been well, if she had observed Purdāh."<sup>65</sup>

In its 8th year Islām-pracārak was again prompted to raise the issue of Purdāh in an article commenting on the Presidential Address of the Aga Khan<sup>66</sup> at the Mohammedan

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64. Alauddin Ahmad, 'Islām darśan,' Islām-pracārak, 5th yr., 3rd-4th no.; Caitra-Bāiśakh, 1309-10 B.S. (1903).
65. Editor, 'Jātiyā o dharma sambād', Islām-pracārak, 6th yr., 12th no.; Cāitra, 1311 B.S. (1905).
66. H.H.Rt.Hon.Aga Sultan Sir Mohammad Shah (1875-1957), the spiritual leader of the Borah Ismailia Shia Community, was for a long time a key figure in Moslem politics in India. He headed the Simla Deputation to Viceroy Lord Minto in 1906, took leading part in founding All-India Moslem Leage and was himself its president for some years.

Educational Conference of 1903, when he "attacked Purdāh as extremely harmful." "Many of these modern [educated] Moslems", Islām-pracāarak alleged, wanted "to give Indian Moslem ladies the same freedom as western women to mix with strangers", and regarded Purdāh as an impediment to "Moslem advancement" and "Female education." Reviewing the history of Purdāh from the days of the Prophet, Islām-pracāarak admitted that the modern system in India was a little more strict than the "simple and liberal" one in the days of Mohammad. Nevertheless, it maintained, "in modern times a somewhat stricter system is undoubtedly required. Because, now owing to the spread of western education, which is atheistic, immoral and irreligious, social ties are gradually slackening." To facilitate female education and enable poor women to earn a living, however, slight modifications did seem indicated.<sup>67</sup> These views were echoed in an editorial in the same issue, with an additional comment that "Egypt has advanced a little too far in this respect and is now absolutely ruined."

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67. Mohammad K.Chand, 'Hejabannesā bā Moslem ramañir pardā', Islām-pracāarak 8th yr., 8th & 10th nos.

Another noteworthy article appeared in Islām-darśan in 1922. Here the author poured scorn on romantic modernists, who desired to translate into reality via such institutions as Nārī svādhīnatā Mission (Female emancipation movement) and Nārī Tirtha<sup>68</sup> (Female pilgrimage centre) the free mixing of the sexes depicted in novelettes. "Can the feeble heart of man remain free from evil thoughts when viewing women? ... Lest sin enter the heart through the eyes, and in order that the hearts of men and women might remain pure, it has been arranged that women be kept in Purdāh."<sup>69</sup>

Six years later (1928) Moyājīn again defended Purdāh. The newly-educated "strongly influenced by alien sentiments" and "bent on abolishing Purdāh" were misguided. Purdāh exalted, rather than humiliated, women. Islam had no place for reformers. The sanctity and respect accorded women under Islam was a mark of advanced civilization. Moyājīn wished neither to impede women in "their good and honest endeavours" nor to keep them in "drawing rooms dressed as

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68. These movements were initiated in the early twenties by a handful of young Moslem social workers, prominent amongst whom was the author (Dāktār) Lutfar Rahman, who in 1922 launched Nārī-śakti, an organ for female emancipation.
69. Mohammad Golam Hossain B.A., 'Islāmer pardā-tattva', Islām-darśan, 3rd yr., 2nd no.; Kārtik, 1329 B.S. (1922).

dolls." The "free mixing of the sexes" was contrary to Purdāh. "It would be wrong to deviate from it before the men of this country become properly educated. Who would be so foolish to let loose ten sheep in front of a tiger?"<sup>70</sup>

(b) Against

In 1917 Al-Eslām put forward a proposal for a slight modification of the Purdāh system suggesting that "in each town and village gardens, open spaces or parks be established suitable for women to take the air in." Only women and children were to be admitted and the sole entertainment mentioned was the holding of meetings to "discuss movements for the improvement and welfare of their country, nation, community and religion."<sup>71</sup>

In 1927 Tablig suggested that "the present Purdāh system is not approved by Islam." Implying that its strictness in India was due to imitation of Hindus, it stated that in independent Moslem realms like Arabia, Egypt, Morocco

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70. Shahadat Ali Khan, 'Islāme pardā-prathā', Movājjin 1st yr., 3rd no.; Kārtik, 1335 B.S. (1928).

71. Ismail Hossain Siraji, 'Strī jātir svādhinatā', Al-Eslām, 2nd yr., 10th no.; Māgh, 1323 B.S. (1917).

and so forth, the Purdāh system was not so excessive: there ladies were still free to go shopping.<sup>72</sup>

Māsik Mohāmmadi the following year "failed to find... any authority for keeping women confined in seclusion ... This murderous system is not in vogue anywhere outside India ... We no more believe that women's character will be ruined the moment they leave seclusion, than we believe that the moment our women-folk start rushing around <sup>^</sup>the maidān and on trains and steamers ... Moslems will rise a metre or two higher each day."<sup>73</sup>

Saogāt in 1929 published an 'Address' which advocated that Bengalee Moslems emulate Turkey, where "free access is open to Turkish women ... in commerce and trade, offices, law-courts, schools, colleges and universities." Purdāh, it was alleged, was lowering Bengalee Moslem vitality. "The abolition of this pernicious system" would be an act of patriotism.<sup>74</sup>

In 1930 Saogāt again condemned Purdāh on medical

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72. Maolvi A. Lohani, 'Islāme nārī', Tablig, 1st yr., 3rd no.; Śrāban, 1334 B.S. (1927).  
 73. Editor, 'Sambādpatre mahilā citra', Māsik Mohāmmadi, 1st yr., 8th no.; Jyāśiṣṣha, 1335 B.S. (1928).  
 74. Abul Mozaffar Ahmad B.A., B.C.L., Bar-at-Law, 'Abhibhāsan', Saogāt, 6th yr., 10th no.; Bāiśākh, 1336 B.S. (1929).

grounds citing Dr. Bentley and others who had reported that Moslem women were "dying of consumption at an alarming rate", the sole cause being lack of fresh air and light, i.e. Purdāh. These unhealthy girls naturally bore sickly children and were thus "weakening the whole race." This "odious" institution, constantly reminded one that "girls have no other life than sex life ... Because of its keeping these ugly customs alive Indian Moslem society seems to be simply a museum of the mediaeval age ... Human intelligence has never created a more harmful institution anywhere."<sup>75</sup>

(c) Synthesis

In 1929 Saogāt put forward a re-interpretation of Purdāh stating that Moslem intellectuals were divided over the matter, "both sides ....quoting scriptures to prove their points." The most important thing, Saogāt maintained, was the development of human potentialities: "whatever promotes that development ought to be adopted...When the

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75. Khan Bahadur Nasiruddin Ahmad M.A., B.L., 'Islām o Musalmān', Saogāt, 7th yr., 8th no.; Cāitra, 1336 B.S. (1930).

heart is closed and impure, what point can there be in seclusion. We want Purdāh, not seclusion. We want the kind of Purdāh, which develops a woman to the fullest extent and gives her the opportunity and capacity to become perfect."<sup>76</sup>

Sariyate Eslām the following year pursued the same line in desiring Purdāh in accordance with "the Sariyat", but being "against the system of seclusion." Obedience to the Sariyat itself would safeguard women from mixing with strange men. It was essential that Moslems should start Madrāsās for girls similar to the new scheme Madrāsās for boys.<sup>77</sup>

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76. Editor, 'Pardā banām abarodh', Saogāt, 7th yr., 1st no.; Bhādra, 1336 B.S. (1929).
77. Maolvi Mohammad Entajuddin, 'Nārī śikṣā o svādhināṭā, Sariyate Eslām, 5th yr., 9th no.; Aśvin, 1337 B.S. (1930). For further information on how an educated Moslem regards the status of women in Islam, see Syed Ameer Ali, The Spirit of Islam, 1891, pp.316-365.

Conclusion.

## I

Before concluding let us briefly recapitulate our findings so far. Throughout our period, and indeed since long before it, the attention of Bengalee Moslems through their own indigenous educational system, their dobhāṣī literature, their mosques and pilgrimages and finally through their newly-emergent press was focused on the Moslem World at the centre of which stood the Sultan of Turkey, who exercised both temporal and spiritual power as Emperor and Caliph. The attitude of Bengalee Moslems to other nations was largely determined by the relations of those nations with the Ottoman Empire: Russia was seen as the arch villain, because of her constant aggressiveness; France was almost as bad, because of her 'atheistic' influence on Young Turks; and Britain as the best of a bad lot.

Bengalee Moslem political attitudes were strongly influenced by events in the Middle East. Towards Britain in the early part of our period Bengalee Moslems strove to be loyal, regarding Britain as friendly to the Moslem World

in general and beneficial to themselves in particular. The interest of Britons and Moslems were seen as interdependent and mutually advantageous. From 1911 onwards, however, relations with Britain deteriorated, contributory factors being the ending of the partition of Bengal (December, 1911), hostilities against Turkey during the First World War, the signing by Britain of the treaty dismembering the Ottoman Empire, and Britain's mishandling of the Caliphate question. From then onwards anti-British feeling amongst Bengalee Moslems generally intensified, and independence finally became their political goal.

Hindu-Moslem relations were never easy. Though some sophisticated Moslems constantly sought compromise in the hope of improving relations, Moslems on the whole were suspicious of Hindu motives. They objected to Hindu interference with their religious observances. They saw no reason to abandon cow-sacrifice. They generally opposed Congress in its early stages from 1885 to 1909, regarding it as anti-British and therefore detrimental to Moslem interests. They were equally opposed to Svadeśī agitations. And they regarded Moslem members of Congress and Moslem participators in the Svadeśī movement as Hindu lackeys. Though deteriorating relations with Britain brought them into political collaboration with

Congressite Hindus, their suspicions remained roused. Orthodox religious leaders were quick to denounce as idolatrous Hindu paintings featuring Moslem leaders; to condemn the singing by Moslems of Bande Mātaram and the display of pictures of mosques at joint Hindu-Moslem meetings. And after the collapse of the Khilāfat movement fatwās were issued condemning Moslem leaders who had through the Khilāfat collaborated with Congress.

Hindu-Moslem relations had always been bedevilled by a number of persistent irritants: opposition to Moslem religious practices by Hindu zemindars; coercion of Moslems into buying Svadeśī commodities, which Hindus sometimes sold at inflated prices; the playing of musical instruments before mosques; the maligning of historical Moslem personages in Hindu literature; the application of Moslems of such pejorative epithets as Mleccha, Yavana and Nere; the exclusion from literature of Perso-Arabic diction and forcible intrusion of archaic Sanskrit terminology; the Hindu orientation of the Western educational system introduced by the British; the exploitation of Moslems by Hindu lawyers and moneylenders; and the refusal of Hindus to understand the Bengalee Moslem word for water, which was itself of Sanskrit origin, namely pāni, which Moslems used in preference to jal.

At times of collaboration attempts were made to play down these irritants, but at others they were intensified. The obsession of Hindus with ritual purity was seen as a constant insult to Moslems. The attempts of Hindu extremists to 'purify' Moslems via the Suddhi and Sangathan movements and thus 'reabsorb' them into Hinduism infuriated Moslems. Insults to Islam and the Prophet in Hindu text books and in the press were regarded as deliberate provocation - as indeed they must have been - and invariably resulted in protests to the authorities, sometimes in general riots and, on rare occasions, in the assassination of the Hindu perpetrator.

## II

The underlying theme of this thesis is the gradual clarification of the identity of the Bengalee Moslems. The concept of identity has, we think, two aspects, positive and negative. The positive aspects of Bengalee Moslem identity were allegedly stressed by orthodox Moslems in their tendency intimately to associate them with the religion, culture and politics of the Middle East,

their claimed region of origin. The negative aspects of Bengalee Moslem identity were supposedly stressed by orthodox Hindus in their tendency to dissociate Moslems from the culture of India. These complementary tendencies, both in our view equally unrealistic, nevertheless, had real consequences: the creation, firstly, of Moslem separatism and, ultimately, of the sovereign state of Pakistan.

Moslem separatism has, of course, a long history. Its ultimate basis is religion, which differentiates between Moslem and infidels. Ideally an Islamic State discriminated between Moslems and infidels: in the defence of the State, for example, Moslems being eligible for military service, contributed physically, whereas infidels, being exempt, contributed only financially. Nevertheless, enlightened Moslem rulers such as Akbar had through tolerance managed to rule successfully large empires where the majority of subjects were infidels.

Bengalee converts to Islam tended through ignorance at first to retain non-Moslem attitudes, values and practices, as can be seen in dobhāṣī literature, where sometimes the names of particular works and the behaviour of <sup>/particular</sup> heroes betray conscious or unconscious Hindu influence. Moslem missionaries strove long to eradicate such vestiges of Hinduism, and continued to do so during our period: witness

the controversy in regard to widow-remarriage; the quarrelling over seating at weddings; the unwillingness to accept socially people engaged in what Hindus would regard as ritually impure occupations.

On the other hand, at earlier periods Hindus had consciously assimilated Moslem culture: they had acquired Persian in Maktabas and Madrassas; their Vaisnavism had become tinged with Sufism; their architecture, the arrangements and furnishing of their homes, their literary tastes, and indeed their clothing had assumed a Moslem character: witness the fluent recitation of Hafej by Rabindranath's father, Devendranath; Rammohan's remarkable proficiency in Persian that earned him the unofficial title of Maolvi; the adoption of Purdāh by Hindu ladies in North India; the eroticism flowing from the pen of Bharatchandra; the turbans and flowing robes of Devendranath and Rammohan, and indeed even of the sternly anti-Moslem Bankimchandra himself.

It was indeed part of the negative aspect of the orthodox assertion of Hindu identity in the early part of the 19th century that condemned these various manifestations of Moslem influence. Much of the satire in the bābu theme

in Hindu literature rests on this condemnation of Moslem influence.<sup>1</sup> The bābu was alleged to eat bread baked by Moslems and to be versed in, or at least to possess volumes printed in, Arabic and Persian. These attacks were of course aimed at Rammohan Roy, who is in fact the prime example of the successful synthesis of Hindu, Islamic and Christian culture; and who may truly be acclaimed as the first genuine Bengalee, a gargantuan figure with a foot planted impossibly, yet deeply in each of Bengal's three major cultures. The very concept of such a synthesis was of course anathema to all three cultures: orthodox Hindus, Moslems and Christians alike were equally opposed to it. The Hindu opposition is seen in their persistent endeavour to see Rammohan and Devēndranath as experts in Sanskrit, drawing their inspiration from the Vedas; whereas in fact they were fluent in Persian and probably no more than mediocre students of Sanskrit. Their inspiration came from Islamic monism: it was only their belated justifications and rationalisations that found a basis in the Upaniṣadas. Thus in our view it was out of

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1. See Bhabanicharan Bandyopadhyay, Naba bābubilās, (reprint) 1937.

a desire to assert the positive aspects of Hindu identity by reaffirming their religious and cultural origins that orthodox Hindus were led to attack the Moslemised bābu; to purge Bengali of Perso-Arabic diction; to try to make Bengali the 'daughter of Sanskrit'; to malign Moslem rulers, heroes, womenfolk, beliefs, practices and institutions; in short, to initiate the process, known as the Hindu renaissance, but which equally well have been known as Hindu separatism.

### III

There are many parallels between the period 1817 to 1867 for Hindus and the period 1880 to 1930 for Moslems. Both were characterised by strong separatist tendencies. These separatist tendencies were in each case initiated by the orthodox section of society. The Hindus in the early 19th century were eager on the one hand to negate Moslem and Christian influences on Hindu society and on the other to reaffirm Hindu attitudes, values and traditions in social conduct, education and literature. Orthodox Hindus detested Missionary schools and European clothing in the early 19th century, no less than did orthodox Moslems detest Hindu-oriented schools and Hindu fashions of dress,

shaving, hair-style and speech in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Just as early in the 19th century orthodox Hindus were eager to publish Sanskrit classics both in the original and translation, so during our period orthodox Moslems wished to publish Arabic and Persian classics. Indeed, in their degree of orthodoxy in clinging to and reasserting their own particular traditions, early 19th century Hindu bigots and late 19th and early 20th centuries Moslem fanatics were much the same.

Other features of the two periods also coincide: the flourishing of Hindu journals from 1818 to 1867 and Moslem ones from 1880 onwards; the insistence of Hindu social reformers on the need to abandon polygamy and child-marriage, and to institute widow-remarriage is paralleled in the later period by the efforts of Moslem moderates to abolish child-marriage, to regulate divorce, to modify Purdāh and generally to ameliorate the lot of women in Moslem society. Orthodox Hindu society was equally convinced in the earlier period as orthodox Moslem society was in the later period that nothing but an increase in licentiousness could result from reforms so subversive to public morality.

In some respects, however, it is dangerous to press the analogy between the two periods too far: the moderate reforming wing in early 19th century Hindu society was

secure and strong. It sprang either from a newly emergent capitalist class like Rammohan and Debendranath or from journalists and educationists of the calibre of Akshaykumar Dutt and Vidyasagar. That is, they were, either financially or intellectually, fiercely independent; and were thus an equal match for their orthodox opponents. On the other hand, there were no new capitalists emerging amongst Bengalee Moslems. On the contrary, Moslem moderates were, in general, financially weak: the wealthy aristocratic classes were aligned mainly with the orthodox. One of the most significant differences between the two periods was that there was in the earlier period no culturally more advanced, politically sophisticated community pressing for a larger share in the country's administration: for the Moslems in the later period, however, there was such a community, namely the Hindus.

It was probably the combination of these factors

- the weakness of Bengalee Moslem moderates;
- the presence of the advanced Hindu community; and
- the backing of the Mullā class by orthodox Moslem zemindars;

that gave to the Bengalee Moslem renaissance its peculiar form. The question of the identity of the Bengalee Moslems was settled mainly by a clash of Hindu and Moslem elites, operating sometimes at an all-India level and sometimes at

the regional level of Bengal. At the elite level Moslem aristocrats and religious leaders were concerned solely with their dedication to the revival and diffusion of Middle-Eastern Islamic culture via, preferably, Arabic and Persian, or at least, via Urdu. Bengali they dismissed as the language of infidel idolatrous Hindus. As such, it was unfit for a place in Maktabs, Madrassas and mosques, where the medium was to be Urdu, Persian or Arabic and the content from the Arab World.

Bengalee Moslem society during our period stood much in need of a Rammohan Roy. The orthodox Hindu society of his day had been backward-looking, obsessed with moribund traditions: he had been forward-looking, desiring not to preserve the traditional form of Hinduism, but to revive its traditional spirit. The same outlook was required in Bengalee Moslem society; and indeed was there, as our extracts show, but it was not sufficiently strong at this period to prevail. Enlightened Bengalee Moslems of this period appear to have been implicitly aware of the fundamental differences between Bengalee Moslem and Bengalee Hindu society. The Bengalee Hindu elite were in the main enlightened capitalists: the Bengalee Moslem elite were

semi-illiterate feudalists.<sup>2</sup> Bengalee Moslem aristocrats spent lavishly: the Bengalee Hindu elite invested wisely. Enlightened Bengalee Moslems spoke of the need to create capital via co-operative banks; to invest in improved agricultural and industrial methods by sending people abroad for training in modern technology rather than in traditional foreign universities, which equipped people only for personal advancement in Government service and in the professions and which did nothing to benefit the community as a whole. The orthodox elite were in fact clinging to a mediaeval scheme of values; the enlightened moderates wished to participate in the world-wide modern capitalist economy by reforming Bengalee Moslem social attitudes.

It is difficult to judge or even to guess at this period of time how far these enlightened Bengalee Moslem reformers were entitled to be called Moslem.<sup>3</sup> One suspects that they were Moslem in a negative, rather than a positive, sense. The orthodox were positively Moslem: they had no

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2. See chapters on Economics p.294 and Society p.377.

3. See chapter on Education pp.250-51.

desire to resemble Hindus or anyone else but Moslems. The moderates were probably Moslem merely in the sense that they were born of Moslem parents and raised in a partially Moslem environment. Their sense of identity probably rested mainly on being non-Hindu, a fact drummed into their heads by orthodox Hindus and Moslems alike. Being non-Hindu had involved them in innumerable difficulties throughout their lives in Schools and Colleges and later in Government offices; they had been ignored, slighted, insulted and discriminated against. To this extent they were Moslem, though not in the 'positive' sense: Urdu was not their mother-tongue, they were reluctant to encourage Arabic, Persian or Dobhāsi; they were Hinduised.<sup>4</sup> They often could not read the Khutbā; they could not understand the Mullā; some even mocked him. They were in fact virtually Moslem in name only; and apparently, as far as one can judge from our extracts, they wished to preserve Islam in name only.<sup>5</sup> They wanted Purdāh, so they said, but defined it in such a way as to alter its meaning.

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4. See chapter on Society pp. 383-85.

5. Ibid, p. 382.

They despised Ribā, so they said, but wished it redefined so as to allow the taking of certain types of interests such as would encourage the development of capitalism. That is, they appear to have wished to retain all the emotionally evocative, verbal symbols of Islam, but wished to deprive them of their mediaeval connotations. They were not alone: the whole character of the Moslem World was changing.

#### IV

No religion is either entirely good or entirely bad. Each can, given suitable conditions, operate to the complete satisfaction of its adherents. Ideally, of course, religion requires to be regarded as superior to Government: for religion claims to control all aspects of human existence, both living and dead, from science to philosophy; since religion claims to explain not only the origin of human life, but also its ultimate purpose. Thus it was that the Alim-editors of the vernacular Bengali Moslem press expounded their views on all aspects of the lives of their readers: Politics, Hindu-Moslem relations, Literature, Education, Economics, Language, Society and Religion. Obviously they had before their

minds' eye a model of the ideal society. At its head was the Caliph, the defender and preserver of the Islamic religion, who ideally held not only spiritual, but also temporal, sway over his subjects. Under his beneficent rule the whole of life was to be ordered on Islamic principles: birth, education, occupation, marriage, marital life, the arts, literature, entertainment, finance, the economy and finally death. The principles were stern, puritanical and, as far as Bengal was concerned, undoubtedly feudal, but, provided they could be applied uniformly, there was no reason why life in accordance with them could not be peaceful, happy and prosperous. The trouble was: they could not be applied uniformly.

In the 20th century no state can exist in complete isolation from the rest of the world. To operate successfully, Islam, or any other religion, needs to be the one and only, universally recognised world-religion. Otherwise, members of other religious communities are bound to impinge upon it and disrupt it. The Ottoman Empire was not without its Christian and Jewish subjects: to treat them as equals was non-Islamic;<sup>6</sup> to oppress them

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6. Editor, 'Musalmān rājya o sāmrajyasamūhe bhīṣaṇa bīplab', Islām-pracāra, 9th yr., 4th no.

invited danger from Russia, who was ever watchful for a pretext to interfere in Ottoman affairs. Then, of course, there were Turkish students educated abroad. Their views, too, conflicted with those of the orthodox. Within the subcontinent of India, the position of Islam was even worse.

There, with the fall of the Mughals, Islam had ceased to be the state-religion. Once this happened, many of its virtues became disadvantageous. The puritanical attitude of Islam towards the arts and society was fundamentally good. There is something to be said in favour of keeping painting and plastic arts, literature and theatre, dress and cosmetics relatively free from eroticism. Purdāh could, as the orthodox claimed, justifiably be interpreted as enhancing, rather than diminishing, the status of women. It favoured marital stability and emotional security, which are both of psychological value to the community. The prohibition of usury, too, benefited society. Possibly it inhibited industrial development; but industry has brought not only benefit to mankind, but some curses as well. The prohibition of usury closed at least one door to the exploitation of the poor. Similarly with education. The contribution of Islam to civilisation, in architecture,

medicine, mathematics and astrology was not slight. Nor indeed had the Mughals been backward in administration or diplomacy. The West had outstripped the East as a result of the Industrial Revolution alone. Thus, there was much to be said for the orthodox point of view.

The trouble was, of course, the orthodox were swimming against the tide of the century. The 19th and 20th centuries have witnessed the gradual secularisation of the State throughout Europe and Asia. Religions march hand-in-hand with authoritarian, monarchical, feudalistic Government. All authority was seen as deriving from, and ultimately sanctioned by, God. This was true of at least the three main religions relevant to the subcontinent of India during our period: namely Hinduism, Islam and Christianity. Religion underlined the legal code. The Emperor's respect for religion was the basis of the subjects' respect for him. This was why the Caliph discriminated against Christians and the Czar of Russia glowered at the Caliph. For the sake of their own stability each felt bound to protect the interests of his own state-religion. But beneath both the Czar and the Caliph mass agitations were afoot, for the 20th century was to become the age of

democracy: the source of power was to become not God above, but the trampled masses below. The powerful man of the future was to be not the chosen representative of God, but the elected representative of the people: monarchical religious empires were to make way for the secular republic. Czarist rule in Russia enfeebled by the blood-letting of the First World War crumbled from within and was smashed beneath a revolution, which was to end in the establishment of a Socialist Republic. The Ottoman Empire, long unsteady, finally tottered and fell, scarred and dismembered by the same war, to become ultimately a secular Republic in 1924. From then on geographic nationalism, accompanied by religious reform and enlightenment, spread throughout the Arab World. At times, of course, the pace of change, as, for example, in Afghanistan under Amanullah, was too swift and counter-reformation movements momentarily held sway. But the tide of events was nevertheless drifting inexorably towards reform and democratisation of the State.

Possibly, had it not been for the constant rivalry of our neighbouring community, the Hindus, that tide would have reached Bengal even during our period. Our extracts show a considerable readiness on the part of Bengalee Moslems to identify themselves as Bengalee on the basis

of birth place and mother-tongue. The words of the editor, Māsik Mohāmmadī on communal riots in Dacca at the end of our period echo so pathetically: (yet no one bothered to calculate) 'how many Bengalees died at the hands of Bengalees'. The whisper from the whirlwind of communal hatred howling through Bengal in those days leading up to the first Round Table Conference obviously went unheard. Those two tendencies noticed earlier - the Hindu Bengalee tendency to exclude Bengalee Moslems from Bengal and the orthodox Bengalee Moslem tendency to include Bengalee Moslems in a world-wide Moslem brotherhood - proved too strong to allow the emergence of Bengalee nationalism. By the 1930s the air was thick with Moslem separatism and, when the mists cleared, the sun fell, not on East Bengal, but on East Pakistan.

Appendix

Descriptive notes on Moslem journals and periodicals published between 1831 and 1930.

- ABHIJAN - A short-lived monthly literary magazine; editor: Mohammad Kasem; first published in 1926 from Dacca.
- AHLE HADIS - Monthly religious magazine; jointly edited by Mohammad Abdul Hakim and Mohammad Babar Ali; first published in September, 1915 (Āṣvin, 1322 B.S.) from Calcutta as the organ of the Afjamān-i-Ahle Hādīs, appearing regularly till December, 1927, and subsequently becoming Weekly.
- In socio-religious matters it promoted the Ahle Hādīs views of the Mohāmmadī Jamāt and vehemently attacked other Moslem sects. Another religious organ, the Islām-darśan, condemned its 'sectarian narrowness and intense anti-Hānāfī bias' as 'fatal' for the Moslem community.
- AHMADI - Fortnightly news and views magazine; editor: Abdul Hamid Khan Yusufji; first

published in July, 1886 (Śrāban, 1293 B.S.) from Delduyar, Mymensingh; it appears to have subsequently merged with Nabaratna, another local periodical, and assumed the title Ahmadī o Nabaratna; publication was still going on in 1889 (1296 B.S.); financed and patronised by Karimunnesa Choudhurani of Delduyar estate.

Primarily concerned with Moslem socio-religious matters and politically pro-Congress, the magazine promoted communal harmony between Hindus and Moslems.

#### AHMADI

- Monthly religious magazine; jointly edited by Golam Samdani B.A. and Daulat Ahmad Khan B.A.; first published in May, 1925 (Bâisākh, 1332 B.S.) from Calcutta as the organ of the Bengal Ahmadi Association.

#### AHMADIYA BULETIN

- Monthly religious magazine; first published in February, 1922 from Calcutta as the organ of the Ahmadī sect.

#### AINUL ISLAM

- Quarterly religious magazine; editor: Choudhury Zahedul Haq; first published in February, 1923 (Fālgun-Bâisākh, 1329-30 B.S.) from Dacca as the organ of Zahed Islam

Mission, becoming monthly from its Jyâiṣṭha number.

Its motto was: "Our ideal is Prophet Muhammad, the Qorān is our law, humanism is what we stand for, and the holy Hādith is the source of our education. Our principal aim is to rescue the fallen."

**AJIJAN NEHAR**

- A short-lived monthly edited by Mir Mosharraf Hossain; launched by some Moslem students of Hooghly College in April, 1874 and published from Chinsura. Its style was commended by contemporary Hindu press.

**AKHBARE ESLAMIYA**

- Monthly religious magazine; editor: Mohammad Naimuddin; first published in 1884 (Bâiśākh, 1291 B.S.) from Kratiya, Mymensingh; still being published in 1895; financed and patronised by Mahmud Ali Khan Panni, zemindar, Kratiya. On the one hand, it had marked sectarian bias in favour of the Hānāfites as against the Mohāmmadīs, on the other, countered Hindu, Brāhma and Christian religious propaganda.

**AL BUSRA**

- Quarterly religious magazine; editor;

Syed Mohammad Abdul Wahed; first published in February, 1921 from Brahmanbaria, Tippera as an organ of the Ahmadiyās.

AL-ESLAM

- Monthly magazine; editor: Mohammad Akram Khan, subsequently edited by Mohammad Manirazzaman Islamabadi; first published in 1915 (Bâisākh, 1322 B.S.) from Calcutta as the organ of the Añjamān-i-Ulemā-i-Bāngālā, and continuing for <sup>about</sup> six years.

Its principal aim was to arouse Bengalee Moslems in all spheres by stimulating interest in such subjects as, Moslem history and tradition, religion and scriptures, society, politics, education, science, language and literature, and finally, Hindu-Moslem issues. It is primarily noted for organising and largely representing contemporary Moslem public opinion.

AL HAK

- Two -monthly magazine dealing with miscellaneous subjects; editor: Maniruddin Ahmad; first published in June, 1919

(Grīṣma, 1326 B.S.) from Rangpur and running for roughly one year.

**AL HAK MYAGAJIN** - Annual literary magazine; editor: Maniruddin Ahmad; first published in November, 1929 from Mymensingh as an organ of Al Hak Sāhitya Samiti.

**AL KADERI** - Monthly; first published in January, 1928 (Māgh, 1334 B.S.) from Rangpur.

**AL-MUSLIM** - Weekly; editor: Fazlul Haq Shelbarshi; published in 1928 from Calcutta, continuing for sometime irregularly under the patronage of Pir Shah Sufi Maolana Abu Bakr Siddiqui and Maolana Ruhul Amin.

Its policy was to oppose atheism and materialism and to reform the Moslem society strictly according to Islamic scriptures.

**ANGUR** - Monthly juvenile magazine; editor: Maolvi Mohammad Shahidullah; first published in 1920 (Bâisākh, 1327 B.S.) from Calcutta and continuing for about a year.

It is Bengal's first Moslem-edited juvenile magazine. The contemporary

orthodox Moslem press attacked its non-communal attitude.

## ANNESA

- Monthly magazine for women; editor: Begum Safia Khatun; first published in April, 1921 (Bâiśākh, 1328 B.S.) from Chhittagong, and subsequently from Calcutta, apparently continuing for more than two years.

The first Bengali journal to be edited by a Moslem woman, it promoted liberal reforms in regard to marriage and purdāh, advocated female education and <sup>ivv</sup>capaigned for domestic and social rights for women.

## BAGURAR KATHA

- Weekly (?); published from Bogra; current in 1925.

## BAKUL

- Quarterly; editor: Waresuddin; first published in 1920 (Aṣārḥ, 1327 B.S.) from Calcutta.

## BANGA NUR

- Monthly literary magazine; editor: Sheikh Habibar Rahman; first published in December, 1919 (Agrahāyaṇ, 1326 B.S.) from Calcutta and continuing irregularly till its Māgh issue of 1328 B.S. (1922).

Though primarily concerned with Moslem

interests, it, nevertheless, aimed at Hindu-Moslem harmony. It also urged Bengalee Moslems to cultivate vernacular language.

**BANĠIYA-MUSALMAN-SAHITYA-PATRIKA** - Quarterly literary

magazine; jointly edited by Mohammad Shahidullah and Mohammad Mozammel Haq; first published in 1918 (Bâisâkh, 1325 B.S.) from Calcutta as the organ of BanĠiya-Musalmân-Sâhitva-Samiti and continuing for five and a half years.

Noted for its launching of a progressive literary movement in Moslem Bengal, it adopted and encouraged liberal, unorthodox views regarding Moslem socio-religious matters. It also strongly advocated Hindu-Moslem harmony.

**BAHADUR**

- Monthly; jointly edited by Mohammad Zainul Abedin and Mohammad Kasimoddin Bashiri; first published in 1923 from Calcutta, and apparently continuing for about a year.

**BALAK**

- Weekly; editor: A.K.Fazlul Haq; first published in 1901 from Barisal.

- BAMLA GEJET** - Weekly; editor: Farrokh Ahmad Nejmipuri, subsequently edited by Khorshed Alam Choudhury; first published in 1929 from Rangoon, and apparently continuing for about two years.
- BARŞIK MOHAMMADI** - Annual literary magazine; editor: Mohammad Khairul Anam Khan; first published in December, 1928 (1335 B.S.) from Calcutta.
- BARŞIK SAOGAT** --Annual literary magazine; editor: Mohammad Nasiruddin; first published from Calcutta in 1926 (1333 B.S.).
- BASANA** - Monthly literary magazine; editor: Sheikh Fazlal Karim; first published in 1908 (Bâisâkh, 1315 B.S.) from Rangpur, and continuing irregularly for about two years.
- Though generally liberal and non-communal, it especially sought the well-advancement of the Moslem community. It championed the cause of Bengali as the mother-tongue of Bengalee Moslems and advocated mass-education for them.

BEDUIN

- A short-lived bi-weekly; editor: Ashraf Ali Khan; first published circa 1930 from Calcutta, and ceasing publication for financial reasons. Its extreme editorial views achieved a certain popularity with a limited range of readers.

BEGAM KHOS

- Monthly; founded and published by Abdur Rashid Siddiqui mainly to publicise his patent drug Begam Khoś.

BHABIKAL

- Fortnightly; editor: Maolana Ali Ahmad Oli Islamabadi; first published in January, 1928 from Calcutta and apparently continuing for about two years.

BHARAT-SUHRD

- Monthly; jointly edited by A.K.Fazlul Haq and Nibaranchandra Das; first published in 1901 (Aṣār, 1308 B.S.) from Barisal.

Its chief aim was "to establish mutual love between Hindus and Moslems".

BHARATER BHARAMNIBARAṆI TRAIMASIK PATRIKA - Quarterly;

editor: Muhammad Abedin; first published in December, 1889 from Calcutta.

BHASKAR

- A short-lived monthly; editor:

Nurul Hossain Kasimpuri; first published in 1920 (Bâisâkh, 1327 B.S.) from Mymensingh.

**BHIŞAK-DARPAÑ**

- Monthly medical journal; editor and proprietor: M.Zahiruddin Ahmad; first published in July, 1891 from Calcutta; continued until January, 1900, <sup>^ after</sup> which it came under Hindu management. It carried some articles by the eminent physician Nilratan Sarkar.

**BIKAŞ**

- Monthly literary magazine; jointly edited by Bande Ali Mia and Purnachandra Vidyaratna; first published in October, 1919 from Calcutta and continuing for about five years; dedicated mainly to Hindu-Moslem harmony.

**BISVA BANİ**

- Weekly; editor: Abu Lohani; first published circa 1928 from Calcutta.

**CHOLTAN**

- See SOLTAN

**DAINIK AMIR**

- A short-lived daily newspaper; editor: Maolana Ali Ahmad Oli Islamabadi; first published in 1929 from Calcutta under the patronage of A.K.Fazlul Haq; aimed at serving the Bengal peasantry.

- DAINIK CHOLTAN** - Daily newspaper; editor: Maolana Manirazzaman Islamabadi, subsequently edited by Delwar Hossain, Ashraf Ali Khan, Maqbul Hossain Choudhury and a few others; first published in 1926 from Calcutta under the patronage of a Board of Trustees composed of local Moslem traders.
- Launched during the Calcutta communal riots of 1926 to defend Moslem interests from the hostile Hindu press, it later fell foul of the Government by participating in political agitations, notably the Civil Disobedience movement.
- DAINIK MOHAMMADI** - A short-lived daily newspaper; editor Mohammad Akram Khan; first published in 1922 from Calcutta.
- DAINIK RASTRABARTA** - Daily newspaper; editor: Loqman Khan Sherwani; published in March, 1930 from Chittagong and continuing for about six months in collaboration with some local Hindu and Moslem leaders.
- DAINIK SEBAK** - Daily newspaper; editor and proprietor: Mohammad Akram Khan; first published in

1921 from Calcutta and apparently continuing till 1922.

A mouthpiece for the Non-cooperation and Svadeśī movements it was once banned for its strong anti-Government political views.

- DĀINIK TARAKKI** - Daily newspaper; editor: Korban Ali, subsequently edited by Serajul Islam and Delwar Hossain; published in 1926, at the time of Hindu-Moslem communal riots, from Calcutta under the patronage of A.K.Guznavi; it soon ceased publication.
- DARADI** - Fortnightly; edited and published by Syed Zahedul Haq Choudhury in April, 1926 from Dacca.
- DEBARŚI DARBĀR** - Monthly; editor: Syed Abul Hossain M.D.; first published in August, 1920 (Bhādra, 1327 B.S.) from Calcutta and continuing till 1922.
- Its aim was to foster unity amongst the people of India and to serve the 'peasants and workers'.
- DESER KATHA** - Weekly; edited and published by Syed Nurul Hossain Kasimpuri in August, 1924 from Bogra.

## DHRUBATARA

- 'Six monthly magazine dealing with miscellaneous subjects'; editor: Mohammad Abdur Rashid B.A.B.T.; first published in December, 1920 from Jessore as an organ of the Alfadanga Students' Association.

## DHUMKETU

- Bi-weekly news and views magazine; editor: Kazi Nazrul Islam; first published in August, 1922 (Śrāban, 1329 B.S.) from Calcutta and still current in January, 1923.

Though short-lived its political extremism created an unprecedented stir amongst the reading public. Such moderate agitations as Svarāj it denounced, favouring instead terrorism and full independence for India. Its editor was eventually jailed. It had a secular outlook and advocated Hindu-Moslem unity.

## DIN DUNIYA

- Monthly; editor: Abul Maola Mohammad Shamsul Huda; first published in June, 1929 (Aṣārḥ, 1336 B.S.) from Mymensingh.

## ESLAM

- Monthly; edited and published by Abdul Monem in 1926 from Rangoon.

## ESLAM SUHRD

- Monthly; editor: Sheikh Abdus Sobhan;

first published in March, 1906 from  
Dacca, continuing till March, 1907.

**FARIDPUR DARPAᅇ** - Fortnightly news magazine; editor:  
Alahedad Khan; first published (?)  
in 1861.

**GAᅇABANI** - Weekly views magazine; editor: Muzaffar  
Ahmad; after a merger with the Lahgal  
of the 'Labour Svaraj Party' it appeared  
in August, 1926 (Bhādra, 1335 B.S.) from  
Calcutta as 'the organ of the Bengal  
Peasant and Labour Party', and continued  
publication till 1928.

It demanded full independence for India,  
and advocated the rule of the people.

It carried translated extracts from the  
Communist manifesto, writings of Karl  
Marx and also from Rajani Palme Dutta's  
India To-day. Poet Nazrul Islam was  
associated with it publishing there his  
Rakta patākāᅇgāᅇ (Song of the Red flag).

**GURUCARAᅇ** - Weekly; editor: not know; proprietor:  
Hakim Najat Ali Shah Kadirī; first  
published in 1889 (Bāiśākh, 1296 B.S.)  
from Calcutta.

**HABLUL MATIN** - Weekly; editor: Mohammad Manirazzaman  
Islamabadi; founder: Aga Maidul Islam

(from Persia); first published around 1912 from Calcutta as the Bengali edition of its Persian number.

## HAFEJ

- A short-lived fortnightly journal; editor and proprietor: Sheikh Abdur Rahim; first published on November 2, 1892 from Calcutta.

## HAFEJ

- 'Monthly magazine dealing with miscellaneous subjects'; editor: Sheikh Abdur Rahim; first published in January, 1897 from Calcutta, continuing till June, 1897. Primarily intended 'to awaken the ignorant Bengalee Moslems' by inspiring appeals to their 'sacred religion'. Though short-lived the magazine excited attention by its literary features.

## HAFEJ SAKTI

- Quarterly; jointly edited by Hafej Khondakar Taheruddin and Hafej Fazlur Rahman; first published in November, 1924 from Mymensingh and continuing for about a year.

## HAKIM

- 'Monthly magazine of Unani medical science'; editor: Hakim Mashihar Rahman: first published in January, 1913 from Calcutta and continuing till August, 1914.

## HANAFI

- Weekly news and views magazine; founder-editor and proprietor: Maolana Mohammad Ruhul Amin, subsequently edited by Mohammad Abdul Hakim and Choudhury Mohammad Shamsur Rahman; first published in 1926 from Calcutta as an organ of the Hanāfites and continuing till 1937.

It aimed at reforming and guiding the Moslem community in strict accordance with the Sariyat.

## HANAFI JAMAYET

- A short-lived daily editor: Sheikh Habibar Rahman; first published in 1926 from Calcutta.

## HANIFI

- Monthly religious magazine; editor: M.S.Nurul Hossain Kasimpuri; first published in December, 1903 from Mymensingh as an organ of the Hanafi sect, apparently still current in 1905.

## HELAL

- Monthly; jointly edited by Mohammad Shamsur Rahman and Delwar Hossain; first published in 1926 from Calcutta and ceasing after three issues.

## HINDU-MOSALMAN SAMMILANI

- A short-lived monthly magazine; editor and proprietor: Munshi Golam

Kader; first published in 1887 (Aṣārah, 1294 B.S.) from Magura, Jessore; its editorial policy was the fostering of Hindu-Moslem communal harmony.

HINDU-MUSALMAN - Weekly; jointly edited by Syed Mohammad Zāaul Haq and Pannalal Dey; first published in July, 1926 from Calcutta.

HITAKARI - Fortnightly; editor and proprietor: Mir Mosharraf Hossain; first published in 1890 (Bâisākh, 1297 B.S.) from Kustiya, subsequently transferred to Tangail; publication continued till 1892 (Bhādra, 1299 B.S.).

It fostered Hindu-Moslem harmony and urged Bengalee Moslems to cultivate the Bengali language.

ISLAM - Monthly literary magazine; editor: Ekinuddin Ahmad; appears to have published in 1885 from Calcutta; publication ceased after two or three numbers.

ISLAM - 'Monthly religious journal publishing Muhammadan scriptures and their Bengali translation'; editor: Madhu Miya; first published in April, 1900 (Bâisākh, 1307 B.S.) from Calcutta; publication was

still going in 1901.

ISLAMABAD

- Weekly; editor: Maolana Farrokh Ahmad Nejumpuri; founder: Abdul Khalek Choudhury; first published in 1927 from Chittagong with the financial assistance of local Moslem traders and continuing for a couple of years.

ISLAM-ABHA

- Monthly; editor: Sheikh Abdul Majid; first published in February, 1913 (Māgh, 1319 B.S.) from Mymensingh.

ISLAM-DARŠAN

- Monthly; editor: Sheikh Abdur Rahim; published in 1916 (Māgh, 1322 B.S.) from Calcutta, apparently ceasing publication after six issues.

ISLAM-DARŠAN

- 'National monthly magazine'; jointly edited by Mohammad Abdul Hakim and Nur Ahmad; first published in 1920 (Bâisākh, 1327 B.S.) from Calcutta under the patronage of Pir Maolana Abu Bakr Sahib as 'the organ of the Añjamān-i-Wāʿejin-i-Bāhgālā' and continuing for about six years. Though primarily a socio-religious magazine, it also dealt with history, education, politics, literature and so forth.

Politically it opposed anti-Government agitations, and in literature denounced secularism, yet in a limited number of socio-religious matters it condemned the superstitions and rituals prevalent in certain sections of Moslem society. Its narrow viewpoint achieved popularity with the orthodox section of Moslem community.

**ISLAM JAGAT**

- Weekly news magazine; first published around 1923 (1330 B.S.) from Calcutta and still current in 1926; mainly concerned with Moslem socio-religious matters.

**ISLAM NUR**

- A short-lived monthly magazine; editor: A.M. Fayezullah Ahmad; first published in 1926 (Māgh, 1332 B.S.) from Calcutta; aimed at propagating orthodox religious views.

**ISLAM-PRACARAK**

- Monthly socio-religious magazine; proprietor-editor: Mohammad Reyajuddin Ahmad; first published from Calcutta in September, 1891 (Bhadra, 1298 B.S.); its publication was suspended after its 2nd year, but resuming in October, 1899 (Śrāban, 1306 B.S.). Thereafter it

appeared spasmodically until 1910.

The magazine was run mainly on public donations, the major contribution coming from zemindars like Nawab Fayezunnesa Choudhurani of Paschingaon.

Its principal aims were: the reformation and propagation of Islam. To achieve this, it fought superstitious Moslem Fakirs, Christian Missionaries and Brahmas. On the other hand, it promoted liberal social reforms; urged Bengalee Moslems to cultivate the vernacular and also encouraged them to take up Western education. Politically, it strongly opposed Congress and whole-heartedly supported the British. It took a keen interest in the affairs of Moslem World. The magazine exercised considerable hold on current Moslem public opinion, however.

**ISLAM RABI**

- A short-lived weekly news magazine; edited and published by Mujibur Rahman around 1900 from Calcutta.

**JAGADUDDIPAK BHASKAR** - Weekly polygot news magazine in five languages viz. Bengali, English, Hindi, Persian and Urdu; editor: Maolawi Rajab

Ali; published in June, 1846 from Calcutta; its publication did not exceed two months.

JAMJAM

- A short-lived monthly juvenile magazine; editor: Mainuddin Hossain; first published around 1930 from Calcutta.

JANAMAT

- Weekly; founder-editor: Mohammad Abdul Monem; first published around 1926 from Chittagong and continuing for a couple of years; it intended to serve the interests of all communities.

JAYATI

- Monthly literary magazine; editor: Abdul Kadir; first published in April, 1930 (Bâisâkh, 1337 B.S.) from Calcutta, ceasing publication after two years. It was currently acclaimed for its liberal and rational policies.

JAGARAN

- Monthly; editor: M.Ahmad Ali; first published in April, 1928 (Bâisâkh, 1335 B.S.) from Dacca and continuing only for a few months.

KHADEM

- Weekly news and views magazine; editor: Mujibar Rahman; first published in 1926 from Calcutta and continuing for a couple of years; it propagated non-communal progressive ideas.

## KOHINUR

- Monthly literary magazine; editor: S.K.M. Mohammad Raoshan Ali; first published in July, 1898 (Āsār, 1305 B.S.) from Kumarkhali, Kustiya, appearing irregularly till its fourth year, re-appearing in Pangsa, Faridpur from 1903 (Bâiśākh, 1311 B.S.) to 1907 (1314 B.S.) and being revived again in Calcutta from 1911 (Bâiśākh, 1318 B.S.) till 1916 (Câitra, 1322 B.S.).

Despite the irregularity and disruptions in its publication it achieved a wide circulation, including even Africa.

It aimed at Hindu-Moslem amity and championed Bengali language and literature.

It carried compositions by a number of Hindu authors and was acclaimed as a pioneer in Moslem literary journalism.

## LAHARI

- Monthly poetry magazine; editor: Mozammel Haq; first published in April, 1900 (Bâiśākh, 1307 B.S.) from Santipur, Nadiya; apparently ceasing publication after one year; it was the first Moslem-edited poetry magazine.

LANGAL

- Weekly views magazine; first published in December, 1925 from Calcutta under the supervision of Kazi Nazrul Islam as the 'Organ of the Labour-Svarāj Party', merging within a few months with the Gaṇa bānī.

The magazine earned immense popularity, especially for Nazrul Islam's writings. It was probably Bengal's first noteworthy Communist journal in vernacular. Tagore blessed it with a specially composed couplet.

MADHU MIYĀ

-, Monthly; editor: Mayezuddin Ahmad; published in 1919 (Kārtik, 1326 B.S.) from Howrah and still current in 1920.

MAHAMMADI AKHBĀR

- Bi-weekly bi-lingual news magazine in Bengali and Urdu; editor: Mohammad Abdul Khalek; first published in June, 1877 from Calcutta.

Stylistically heavily Perso-Arabic, it continued as a bi-weekly for about ten months, then becoming weekly for about two months before finally ceasing publication.

- MAKTAB - Monthly juvenile magazine; editor: Sakhawat Hossain; first published in May, 1930 from Dacca.
- MASJED - Monthly religious magazine; editor: Ahmad Sobhan; published in May, 1917 (1324 B.S.) from Satkhira, Khulna and continuing for about a year. It aimed at expounding and propagating the Hānāfite doctrine.
- MADRACHA MYAGAJIN- Two-monthly magazine; editor: Abul Maola Mohammad Shamsul Huda; first published in February, 1930 from Mymensingh.
- MASIK MOHAMMADI - Monthly literary magazine; editor: Mohammad Akram Khan; first published in August, 1903 from Calcutta, apparently suspended in 1904, resumed in 1927 (Kārtik, 1334 B.S.) and still continuing from Dacca.
- Like other major contemporaries it helped initiate the renaissance of Moslem Bengal. On controversial socio-religious issues it steered mid-way between radicals and conservatives, thus achieving constant success with moderates. Sometimes it was

a distinctly liberal periodical with progressive views on many matters.

MIHIR

- 'Monthly magazine dealing with miscellaneous subjects'; editor and proprietor: Sheikh Abdur Rahim; first published in January, 1892 from Calcutta, appearing irregularly till August, 1893, subsequently merging with Sudhākar under the title Mihir o Sudhākar.

Its publication is regarded as one of the first noteworthy literary ventures by Bengalee Moslems.

MIHIR O SUDHARKAR - Weekly news magazine; editor: Sheikh Abdur Rahim, subsequently edited by Mohammad Reyajuddin Ahmad, Matiar Rahman and Syed Osman Ali; first published in 1895 from Calcutta and apparently continuing till 1910 (1317 B.S.). It was financed and patronised by a number of Moslem zemindars including Nabab Ali Choudhury and Sir Khwaja Salimullah Bahadur.

It supported British rule presumably due to its backing by the pro-Government landed aristocracy. On social and

and educational matters it took a liberal and progressive line.

- MOSALMAN PATRIKA - Monthly; edited and published by Mahtabuddin in January, 1901 from Jessore.
- MOSAFIR - A short-lived monthly literary magazine; editor: Sheikh Mohammad Idris Ali; first published in 1924 (Kārtik, 1331 B.S.) from Howrah.
- MOSLEM-BĀŪI - Weekly; editor: Abul Kasem; first published from Calcutta as the 'Organ of the Añjamān-i-Mainul Islām' at the time of communal riots in 1926 and continuing for about seven months.
- MOSLEM BHĀRAT - Monthly literary magazine; editor; Mozammel Haq; first published in May, 1920 (Bâisākh, 1327 B.S.) from Calcutta, continuing till Pāuṣ, 1328 B.S. (1921). Though short-lived it achieved prominence in literary circles being contributed to by many authors of renown including Rabindranath Tagore and Nazrul Islam. It sought to unite 'Mother Bengal's' two sons, the Hindus and Moslems in literary bonds. It also sought the all-round awakening of Moslem Bengal.

- MOSLEM DARPAN - Monthly religious magazine; edited and published by Hakim Mashihar Rahman Qureshi; first published in January, 1925 from Calcutta continuing till July, 1931. Religiously dogmatic it strongly opposed the Kadiyānis and the Arya samājites and contended bitterly with the Sariḡate Eslām over the interpretation of scripture and rituals.
- MOSLEM HITAIṢI - Weekly; editor: Sheikh Abdur Rahim; published under the patronage of Pir Maolana Abu Bakr in 1911 from Calcutta, apparently continuing till 1921. It intended by the adoption of a pro-Government policy to safeguard the interests of the Moslem community.
- MOSLEM-PRATIBHĀ - Monthly; jointly edited by Sheikh Abdur Rahim and Mozammel Haq; first published in December, 1907 (Agrahāyān, 1314 B.S.) from Calcutta, ceasing publication after its first number.
- MOYAJJIN - Quarterly literary magazine; editor: Syed Abdur Rab; first published in 1928 (Bâisākh, 1335 B.S.) from Faridpur as the organ of Khādemul Ensān Samiti, continuing

till its 11th year.

Though noted for its non-communal liberal attitude it desired especially to stimulate Moslem Bengali literature via Moslem renaissance in Bengal.

MUSALMAN

- Weekly news magazine; editor; Mohammad Reyajuddin Ahmad; first published as an 'Organ of Moslem community' in January, 1884 from Calcutta, though actually controlled by a Hindu (Mr. Sashibhusan Mukherji of the weekly The Indian Echo); it lasted for about three months.

MUSALMAN-BANDHU

- Monthly; editor: Hasibul Hossain; apparently first published in 1885 from Calcutta.

MUSALMAN-SIKṢĀ-SAMABĀY

- A tri-annual magazine; editor: Mirza Mohammad Yusuf Ali; first published in April, 1919 (Bâiśākh, 1326 B.S.) from Rajshahi as 'A Report of the Mussalman Education Committee'.

MUSLIM JAGAT

- Weekly views magazine; editor: Abdur Rashid Siddiqui; first published in 1922 (1329 B.S.) from Calcutta and apparently continuing for about two years. Primarily aimed at promoting Moslem

awakening in Bengal it bore anti-Government views, and its editor was jailed.

NABANUR

- Monthly literary magazine; editor: Syed Emdad Ali; first published in May, 1903 (Bâisâkh, 1310 B.S.) from Calcutta, continuing for about four years.

It may be acclaimed as one of the first noteworthy Bengalee Moslem literary ventures. Besides literature it also handled religious and social matters, history, education, female emancipation and politics. Generally speaking, its editorial policy was liberal being aimed at establishing communal harmony via the cultivation of literature. It is of note that its contributors included a good number of Hindus.

NABA-SUDHAKAR

- A short-lived weekly news magazine; editor: Mohammad Reyajuddin Ahmad; founded by Munshi Abdul Moyez of the English language weekly the Crescent; apparently first published in 1886 from Calcutta.

## NABAYUG

- Daily news paper; edited jointly by Kazi Nazrul Islam and Muzaffar Ahmad, and patronised and managed by A.K. Fazlul Haq; first published from Calcutta in May, 1920; it ceased publication in 1921.

Primarily a political organ, it supported all nationalist agitations, especially the Congressite and the Khilāfat; and on this account its security deposit was forfeited. The paper's popularity was due to Nazrul Islam's inflammatory writings.

## NAKIB

- Fortnightly; editor: Nur Ahmad; first published in January, 1926 (Māgh, 1332 B.S.) from Barisal.

## NAOJOYAN

- Quarterly; editor: Nasiruddin Ahmad; first published in September, 1929 (Bhādra, 1336 B.S.) from Jalpaiguri as 'Organ of the Jalpaiguri Students' Literary Association'.

## NAOROJ

- Monthly literary magazine; editor; Mohammad Afzalul Haq; first published in June, 1927 (Aṣār, 1334 B.S.) from Calcutta, continuing till November, 1927.

Renowned for its spectacular production it aimed at disseminating liberal and rational ideas.

NAJAT

- Fortnightly views magazine; editor: Mohammad Sekandar Ali; first published in November, 1926 from Comilla as an organ of Tripura Khilāfat Karmmī Saṅgha.

NĀRI-SAKTI

- Monthly; editor: Lutfar Rahman; first published in September, 1922 (Āsvin, 1329 B.S.) from Calcutta as an organ of Nārī Tīrtha (Home of the fallen women), still current in 1923.

NUR

- Monthly; editor: Ismail Hossain Siraji; first published in 1920 (Māgh, 1326 B.S.) from Sirajganj and continuing for a few months only.

NUR-AL-IMĀN

- Monthly socio-religious magazine; editor; Mirza Mohammad Yusuf Ali; first published in 1900 (Āṣārh, 1307 B.S.) from Calcutta on behalf of the Nur-al-imān society, apparently continuing for one year. Identifying itself as an 'Islamic magazine' ('Eslāmi patrikā') it sought to expose the defects and vices enervating the Moslem society.

- NURAL ISLAM** - Annual magazine; editor: Mohammad Meherullah; first published in 1901 (1308 B.S.) from Jessore; owned by a Hindu, Sri Amritalal Da.
- PAYGAM** - Weekly news magazine; editor: Abu Lahani; published in 1928 from Calcutta and soon ceasing publication.
- PARIL BARTABAHA** - A short-lived fortnightly news magazine; editor: Maolvi Anisuddin Ahmad; first published in 1874 (Pâuṣ, 1281 B.S.) from Paril, Dacca.
- PRABHAKAR | MASLEM-SAHACAR BA ESLAM-CERAG** - Monthly religious magazine; editor: Mohammad Ayub Khan; first published in 1912 (Pâuṣ, 1318 B.S.) from Hooghly, apparently ceasing publication sometime after July, 1913.
- PRACARAK** - Monthly religious magazine; editor and proprietor: Munshi Mayezuddin Ahmad; published in February, 1899 (Māgh, 1305 B.S.) from Calcutta, continuing irregularly for four years; financed by some leading Moslem zemindars.
- Out to stimulate Bengalee Moslems in all spheres it carried features on religion,

literature, philosophy, science, education, society, politics, and current national and international affairs. Though primarily committed to Moslem interests it, nevertheless, sought to promote Hindu-Moslem harmony, and generally speaking, on almost all vital, controversial issues maintained a liberal unorthodox attitude.

PRATIKA

- Annual literary magazine; editor: Habibullah Bahar; first published circa 1930 from Calcutta by courtesy of the Khidirpore Young Moslem Association.

RAOSAN HEDAYET

- Monthly religious magazine; editor: Mohammad Ebrahim; first published in 1924 (Aṣṣārah, 1331 B.S.) from Pabna as an organ of the 'Bengal Ulemā' and continuing for more than two years.

Principally intended to defend and propagate the Hānāfite doctrine it responded to the current Hindu-Moslem communal issues and political agitations, as thoroughly anti-Hindu and strongly opposed to Suddhi movement, denouncing all anti-Government activities including the Svarāj-Khilāfat-Congressite agitations.

- RAYAT BANDHU - Weekly magazine; editor: Munshi Mohammad Reyaguddin Ahmad; first published circa 1926 from Calcutta and soon ceasing publication. It intended to serve the interests of the peasants and small holders.
- SABUJ PALLI - Monthly magazine; editor: Mohammad Zafar Ali; first published in 1926 (1333 B.S.) from Dacca as the organ of the Palli-sebā-samiti, still current in 1928.
- SAHAGAR - Monthly literary magazine; editor: Syed Naoser Ali, subsequently edited by Shahadat Hossain, Mohammad Lutfar Rahman and Emdad Ali Khan; first published in January, 1922 (Māgh, 1328 B.S.) from Calcutta and continuing till 1923.
- SAMACAR SABHARAJENDRA - Weekly bi-lingual news magazine in Bengali and Persian; editor and proprietor: Sheikh Alimullah; first published on March 7, 1831 (Fālgun, 1237 B.S.) from Calcutta; apparently ceasing publication prior to 1835. It was the first Moslem-edited Bengali journal, and followed a conservative policy.

## SAMMILANI

- Weekly magazine; edited and published by Abdul Monem, subsequently edited by Didarul Alam; first published in 1924 from Rangoon and continuing till 1928.

## SAMSAARI

- Monthly magazine 'dealing with hygiene and domestic science'; editor: Syed Abdul Karim; first published in 1924 (Bâisâkh, 1331 B.S.) from Dacca, continuing till 1929.

## SANCAY

- Monthly magazine; editor: K.M. Abdur Rahman; first published in 1928 (Âsvin, 1335 B.S.) from Dacca and continuing till 1929 (Pâuš, 1336 B.S.) It intended to initiate rational and free thinking in Moslem society.

## SAOGATI

- "Illustrated monthly magazine"; proprietor-editor: M. Nasiruddin; first published in December, 1918 (Agrahâyan 1325 B.S.) from Calcutta; publication was suspended in 1922 but resumed in 1926, and still continues from Dacca.

Its longevity has given the magazine a distinguished place in Moslem journalism.

It always encouraged young free-thinking Moslem intellectuals with progressive and liberal leanings in socio-political and religious affairs. It especially strove to elevate the status of women in Moslem society and strongly advocated improved Hindu-Moslem relations. The magazine is also important for launching a new literary movement in Moslem Bengal.

**SATYAGRAHI**

- Weekly views magazine; editor:

Mohammad Abdullah hel Kafi; published in 1924 (1331 B.S.) from Calcutta; it continued for about two years.

The magazine aimed primarily at defending and propagating conservative religious views and opposed the Western way of life.

**SADHANA**

- Monthly literary magazine; editor:

Abdur Rashid Siddiqui; published from Chittagong in April, 1919 (Bâisâkh, 1326 B.S.) and subsequently from Calcutta; it continued till 1922.

The editor took part in the Non-cooperation movement and was once imprisoned.

**SAHITYIK**

- Monthly literary magazine; edited

jointly by Mohammad Yakub Ali Choudhury

and Golam Mostafa B.A.B.T.; published from Calcutta on behalf of Bāngīva Musalmān Sāhitya Samiti in January 1927; it continued for a year.

Besides literature, the magazine dealt with such subjects as Moslem history, Islamic religion, Culture and civilization, and expressly avoided politics.

#### SAMYABADI

- Quarterly magazine; editor: Mohammad Wajed Ali, subsequently edited by Khan Mohammad Mainuddin and Ali Ahmad Oli Islamabadi; published from Calcutta as an organ of the Āijamane tarkkiye kaom, Bāngālā in 1923 (Māgh, 1329); it continued for three years.

Its major aim was "to preach in our society Islamic socialism and brotherhood by attempting to ameliorate the plight of the depressed classes such as peasants, weavers, fishermen, oilmen and others".

#### SAPTAHIK MOHAMMADI

- Weekly news and views magazine; editor: Mohammad Akram Khan, subsequently edited by Najir Ahmad Choudhury and Mohammad Khairul Anam; first published in 1908

from Calcutta, continuing intermittently till recent years.

- SAPTAHIK SAOGAT** - Weekly news and views magazine; editor: Mohammad Nasiruddin; published from Calcutta in May, 1928 (1335 B.S.). The magazine opposed orthodox Mullaism on socio-religious matters; promoted nationalism in Indian politics; and strongly denounced Western Imperialism, particularly in Moslem countries.
- SAURABH** - Monthly literary magazine; editor: Rejaul Karim; published from Behrampur, Murshidabad in 1925 (Jyâishtha, 1332 B.S.); still current in 1926.
- SEBAK** - Quarterly magazine; edited jointly by M.S.Uddin and Jyotsnamay Sarkar; published from Calcutta as the organ of Satsangha in 1928.
- SEBAKER BANĪ** - Monthly magazine; editor: Kazi Nurul Osman; published from Jessore in August, 1930 (1337 B.S.).

SOLTAN

- Monthly magazine; editor: M.Najiruddin Ahmad; published from Sirajganj, Pabna in May, 1901; it soon ceased publication.

SOLTAN/CHOLTAN

- News and views weekly; editor: Reyajuddin Ahmad, subsequently edited by Manirazzaman Islamabadi, first published from Calcutta in 1902 and continuing until around 1910; it resumed publication in April, 1923 (Baisākh, 1330 B.S.) with its title refashioned to Choltān and suffixed by the phrase, naba parvāy i.e. 'new order'; it was later incorporated in its daily edition. (See Dāinik Choltān.)

Intended primarily to serve Islam by preserving the 'Moslem interests', it, nevertheless, pursued a policy of promoting 'the general welfare of the country'. Despite being Mullā-dominated, it stood for liberal reforms in socio-religious matters. On the other hand, it advocated Hindu-Moslem harmony, favoured Congress-policies and, most

importantly, played a vital role as an organ of the Khilāfat-svarāj movements in Bengal.

## SONAR BHARAT

- Two-monthly magazine dealing with literature and socio-religious matters; editor: Mohammad Javed Ali; published from Calcutta in 1923 (Āsvin, 1330 B.S.).

## SUDHAKAR

- Weekly news magazine; editor: Mohammad Reyazuddin Ahmad, subsequently edited by Sheikh Abdur Rahim; first published in 1889 (Pâuṣ, 1296 B.S.) from Calcutta, continuing for more than two years. Patronised by both Hindu and Moslem leaders, it was financed by Moslem zemindars, and was noted for liberal, non-communal policy, though it is heralded as "Moslem Bengal's first national paper".

## SUHRD

- Monthly magazine; editor: A.D.Khan; published from Cuttack, Orissa in 1904; still current in 1906.

## SUNITI

- Weekly magazine; founder-editor:  
Khan Bahadur Aman Ali: subsequently  
edited by Khan Bahadur Mohammad Anwarul  
Azim M.A. (Cantab.), Barat Law, C.I.E.  
and Begum Tohftaunnisa Azim; first  
published from Chittagong in 1916.  
The publication followed pro-Government  
policies.

## SARIYAT

- Monthly religious magazine; editor:  
Maolana Ahmad Ali Enayetpuri;  
published from Calcutta as "the sole  
mouthpiece of the Bengal Hanafi sect"  
in 1924 (Baishakh, 1331 B.S.).  
The magazine held narrow, dogmatic  
views and was strongly critical of the  
Mohammadi sect.

## SARIYATE ELSAM

- Monthly religious magazine; editor:  
Maolana Ahmad Ali Enayetpuri;  
published from Calcutta in February, 1926  
(Māgh, 1332 B.S.), and still current  
in 1931.  
The magazine held orthodox views, intending  
to guide Moslem community in strict  
accordance with the Sariyat. Though  
opposed to the Non-cooperation and Civil

Disobedience movements, it nevertheless condemned communal riots and promoted cordial relations between Hindus and Moslems.

SIKHA

- Annual literary magazine; editor: Abul Hussain; subsequently edited by Kazi Motahar Hossain, Mohammad Abdur Rahid and Abul Fazal; published from Dacca as "the organ of Muslim Sāhitya Samāij" (Moslem literary society) in April, 1927; it continued for five years.

The magazine challenged many conventional beliefs and ideas on socio-religious matters concerning the Moslem community. Emphasizing free, rational thought, it instilled fresh ideas into the minds of young Moslem intellectuals and eventually initiated in Moslem Bengal a new movement known as the 'emancipation of intellect'.

SIKṢAK

- 'Monthly journal on educational matters'; editor: Khan Saheb Kazi Imdadul Huq B.A.B.T.; published from Calcutta in 1920 (Bâisākh, 1327 B.S.); still being published in 1923.

- SISUMAHAL** - Monthly juvenile magazine; editor: Mohammad Afzalul Haq; published from Calcutta in 1927 (Bhādra, 1334 B.S.).
- SISU-SAOGAT** - Monthly juvenile magazine; editor: Mohammad Nasiruddin; first published in April, 1922 from Calcutta.
- TABLIG** - Monthly religious magazine; edited jointly by Sheikh Mohammad Delwar Hossain and Mohammad Samsur Rahman Choudhury; published from Calcutta in May 1927 (Jyāiṣṭha, 1334 B.S.).  
The magazine was launched "with a vow to resist the Suddhi-Wālās in their anti-Islamic campaign". Its editors intended to give the publication a 'respectable look' like that of the Islamic Review put out from Woking mosque in England.
- TARUN** - Two-monthly magazine; editor: M. Meser Ali; published from Bogra in 1928 (1335 B.S.); it appears to have continued for about a year.
- TARUN PATRA** - Monthly magazine; edited jointly by Mohammad Fazlul Karim Mallick and Ahmad Hossain B.A.; published from Calcutta as an "organ of the Young Moslems" in

1925 (1332 B.S.); it soon ceased publication.

**TARUNER DANDA O ESLAMER JHANDA** - Weekly news magazine; published from Calcutta in 1930 and patronised by the Pir of Furfura. It promoted pro-Sariyat views.

**TAIDE ESLAM** - Monthly socio-religious magazine; editor: Shah Syed Abul Kasem Hanafi al Kaderi; published from Rangpur in January, 1928 (Māgh, 1334 B.S.).

**TANGAIL HITAKARI** - Weekly magazine; editor: Moslemuddin Khan; first published in 1892 (1299 B.S.) from Tangail, Mymensingh.

**YUGABANI** - Weekly magazine; editor: Makbul Hossain Choudhury; published from Sylhet in 1924 and was still current in 1925.

**YUGER ALO** - Quarterly literary magazine; editor: Didarul Alam; published from Chittagong in 1926 (Māgh, 1332 B.S.), subsequently from Rangoon as a monthly magazine; it continued till 1928.

Other little-known journals.

- GOYALANDA SUHRD - A periodical brought out by M.Najiruddin from Faridpur.
- NAYA BANGLA - Weekly news and views magazine; jointly edited by Maolana Ali Ahmad Oli Islamabadi and Ashrafuddin Choudhury; published from Calcutta.
- SANTI - Monthly literary magazine; published from Chittagong.
- YUGER JYOTI - Monthly literary magazine; editor: Saidur Rahman; published from Rangoon.

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