

The background of the cover is a photograph of the Taj Mahal in Agra, India, captured during the 'golden hour' of sunset. The sky is a deep, warm orange, and the white marble of the mausoleum is silhouetted against it. The central dome and four minarets are clearly visible. The entire scene is reflected in the calm waters of the reflecting pool in the foreground, creating a symmetrical effect. The overall color palette is monochromatic, dominated by shades of orange and yellow.

The Non-Hindu Indians and Indian Unity

by
Savitri Devi

Calcutta
1940

*“Nation first, religion afterwards;
no god is worth the sacrifice of
reborn India before his altar.”*

(p. 13)

**TO THE MEMORY OF
SULTAN TIPPU**

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PREFACE

In July last, (1940) I saw the tomb of Sultan Tippu, near Seringapatam. It lies three or four miles away from the ruined walls of the city, in a lonely place. I walked through a beautiful garden to the room where the gallant Indian is sleeping his last sleep by the side of his father Hyder Ali, and of his mother. There was not a soul to be seen, and the only sound I could hear was the endless lamentation of the wind in the high trees. The overwhelming quietness penetrated me. Words read upon a tombstone in Europe, years and years ago, came back to me as an expression of the ultimate goal of all life: "Peace, perfect peace."

Then suddenly, I thought of India, — that India whom I have made mine. Tippu died for her to live and flourish. Did he die in vain? Centuries of decay and disaster, of foreign invasions and internal strife, rushed before my mind. "Will India ever enjoy peace — not the stillness of the dead, but peace in the joy of life"? And it was as if something

from within me answered: “Yes, if one day the Indians can forget social prejudice and communal hatred, and love one another.”

I soon reached Tippu’s tomb, and stood by it, lost in my thoughts. The picture of the ruined defences of Seringapatam was vivid in my mind. I also remembered the spot where the Sultan was found dead after the fall of the city, and the little I had read in my childhood about Tippu took a new colour and a new sense, there, before the stone under which he lies. All that I had learnt in India also took a new colour and a new sense. The inessential matters which, too often, are taken as fetishes by both Hindus and Mohammedans, and become the occasion of inter-communal squabbles, were forgotten. I could only think of one thing in the silence of the room where lies the great Tippu, who died for India’s freedom, and that was that India’s latent craving for internal peace and unity should put an end to communal strife, and make us all march together, — one heart, one will, — like those who fought, then, under the walls of Seringapatam. The room itself was to me a sanctuary, for it contains not a Mohammedan, not a Hindu, not a man, but a symbol of everlasting India. And, I bowed down before Tippu’s tomb as I would have done before the sacred image

in any Hindu shrine.

When I got up, I saw an old man standing by my side, with a book in his hand. It was the “visitor book”; the old man asked me in Hindustani if I would like to write something in it. Under the signatures of half a dozen European tourists, I wrote: “May the spirit of the Indian warrior who lies here inspire us all, — Hindus and Mohammedans alike, — and guide us in our present-day struggle for national independence.”

There was peace in the air; peace also in the old man’s eyes. In the high trees, the endless lamentation of the wind was like a song of peace. And when I reached the gates of the silent enclosure and came in contact with life once more, the innocent laughter of a few children along the road made me dream of a future India where communal consciousness would be no more. I wrote this booklet on my return to Calcutta, as an immediate continuation of the thoughts inspired in me by my visit to Sultan Tippu’s tomb and to the ruins of his fortress.

Savitri Devi

Calcutta, September 1940

Chapter 1

TWO NATIONS?

The Hindu-Moslem problem, as set before us in India, is not a “new” problem in the annals of the world, not a problem particular to India by nature. It is the problem which, sooner or later, has to be faced in every country where, as a result of prolonged alien domination or of successful proselytism, or of both combined, a portion of the people have since a long time adopted a cult, a tradition and, to a certain extent, a civilisation, different from those which were formerly shared by all the citizens.

A somewhat similar situation was met with at different epochs of the past in Spain, in Northern Africa, and in different parts of the Balkans. In some places the problem has been solved by the annihilation of one of the two communities under the pressure of brutal force or otherwise (expulsion of the Spanish Moors by the Catholics, total Islamisation of North Africa). In others, on the contrary, the two communities live in peace side by side. This is, for instance, the case of Bosnia, a province of Yugoslavia

with 75 % Mohammedan population, where, in the midst of the Christian world, Mohammedan religion and customs are preserved up to this very day, within the limits and under the conditions of a growing modern state.

We must remark that the Spanish (or the North African) solution of the difficulty, — that is to say the annihilation of one of the conflicting communities, — is the only rational and desirable one wherever the two communities actually represent *two* nations. Two nations cannot flourish in peace within the limits of the same state. Either the state is alien to both of them, and they are both dependent, or else one of them practically rules over the other. But *two* living nations can never make one.

The solution finally adopted in Bosnia where Mohammedan Slavs and Christian Slavs live together in peace is by all means the best wherever it is applicable. But it presupposes the existence of *one nation only*, in spite of all religious and customary differences among the citizens.

* * *

The Indian communal problem must be carefully

distinguished from any *religious* conflict.

Even in Europe and in the Near East, during the bitterest 'religious' conflicts of the Middle Ages, interests and ambitions of this world added no little to men's pious fury. Moreover the people of India have never been seriously divided on a purely religious basis. The long opposition of the Hindus to the Buddhists, in the past, had a predominant *social* factor at its root: the rejection of caste rules by the Buddhists. Wherever opposition thoroughly existed it was not the opposition of two "religions" — two paths to salvation, — nor even of two metaphysical systems (Indians relish to discuss metaphysics but never cared to fight for them); it was the opposition of *two social orders*.

The notorious Hindu-Moslem antagonism has also no serious religious basis, especially on the Hindu side. It is the antagonism of two portions of the very same population who have, to a certain extent, different ways of living; who keep up, at different times, festivities commemorating events which have nothing to do with each other; who do not worship in the same way nor in the same places; who do not call their children by the same names, etc. In one word, it starts with the opposition of many exterior signs regarded as revealing an underlying

difference of two civilizations. Much better would it be for India if this antagonism were but a religious one! And it seems rapidly growing into an antagonism between two new-born national consciousnesses.

While Hindus and Musulmans, taken individually, are far from being as different from each other as many people may think, while *they do*, to a great extent, share the same civilisation, at least as much as, if not more than any two Bosnians do, a clever propaganda is inciting them to look upon each other as foreigners on the sole ground and or the sole reason that A is a Hindu and B a Musulman.

Two nations cannot make one, have we said. But clever propaganda *can* split one nation in two.

* * *

If the Indian Hindus and the Indian Mohammedans actually were two nations, then there would be three alternatives before them:

- 1) Both to remain forever quarrelling under foreign yoke.
- 2) To separate, not only politically, (separate electorate, communal award etc.) but also territorially

(Hindu India and Pakistan).

3) To “fight it out” so that, just as in all wars, the strongest may win, and let the strongest alone build up a new India in which the other community — whichever it may be, — would be assimilated by force or annihilated.

Of the three the first alternative is undoubtedly the worst because it is a disgraceful one. The second is unpractical, and would in course of time become the source of endless war, between two discontented Indias. The third would be the only reasonable, practical and manly solution. If Hindus and Musulmans really represent, in India, two different nations, the only thing one can say to them is indeed: “*Fight it out*, and let the whole of India with her gigantic material, political and cultural possibilities, — her endless future, — become once for all the prize of the victors, whoever they may be.”

But the question is: “Are there really *but* these three alternatives of which merciless war is by far the best?” that is to say: “Are the Indian Hindus and the Indian Musulmans actually two nations?”

* * *

An impartial study of the inter-communal relations in India, not merely now, but also a few years ago, before the present stage was reached, will convince one that the Hindus and Musulmans of India *are not two nations yet*. They are not one nation yet, either. They were until now and they are still merely two huge flocks, one more homogeneous than the other, but undoubtedly two flocks of the *same population*, which systematical training in mutual hatred can organise into two distinct and antagonistic nations, *but which a no less systematical training in love and service of the same motherland can definitely amalgamate into one*.

The problem is not; “The Indian Musulmans and the Hindus are two nations; how should they deal with, each other?” But: “The Indians have been since a long time and are still two main flocks namely the Musulmans and Hindus; *do they desire to become two nations or one?*”

* * *

To those among the few communally minded Indians who sincerely desire to see two nations grow on this soil we have nothing to say. Nothing except that the Hindus and Musulmans are distributed

in such a way, in the different parts of India, that territorial separation of the two communities will not be an easy job. How to establish, for instance, the constant contact of East Bengal, — that stronghold of Indian Islam, — with Punjab, Kashmir, Afghanistan, Sindh etc. . . , the other and more extensive bloc of the same would-be Mohammedan “nation” through the undisputedly Hindu territories of Bihar, United Provinces, Rajputana etc. . . ? Or are these unfortunate Moslems of North and East Bengal, — half the population of Moslem India, without counting the States, — to remain isolated or to emigrate? And there are many other difficulties in that well-known “Pakistan scheme,” difficulties which the practically minded Musulman leaders were the first ones to point out. It would be better to drop the idea altogether and urge each one of the two communities to prepare for a tough fight with the other, as soon as possible. Sooner the better. Only the fight will have to be a tough one. The Hindus know it is not easy to silence the voice of more than eight crores of Musulmans. It is difficult to convert them all, especially when most Hindus themselves still resent the idea of conversion; difficult also to expel them all from India. They are not a few thousands, not a few hundreds of thousands, but eight crores,

— equal in number to the population of Germany in 1939, greater than the whole population of Japan; greater than the population of the main Musulman countries of the world: Turkey, Egypt, Arabia, Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan rolled in one. But the Mohammedans who desire two distinct nations to grow out of the two present Hindu and Moslem groups, and who are therefore seeking a clash, should also not forget that it will not be easy to overcome definitely twenty-eight crores of Hindus, once these are united in one national consciousness and organised.

To “fight it out,” which is the only ultimate solution we will sooner or later have to face, if we must become two nations — is not even so simple as it looks. The fight would be hard. It would perhaps also last a long time, provided the outside world does not put a stop to it.

But why desire at all to become two nations when it is yet possible to become only one? Why not try to build up *one* compact Indian nation out of the two or more communal groups?

* * *

The non-Hindu Indians, whether Musulmans or others, should never forget that their ancestors

and those of the present day Hindus were *the same*; that they are not the children of a foreign land, not conquerors, not raiders of India, not settled foes, but Indians. In fact, they seldom do forget it, unless they are systematically taught to. Their unconscious mind, if not silenced by false knowledge, always remembers it.

If in India less stress was put, in daily life, upon communal distinctions, it would take time to make out who is a Hindu and who is not. It is still difficult for a Northern Indian travelling in the South, where the strongest minority is composed of Christians, to distinguish at first sight who is a Hindu and who is a Christian. Same language, same dress, same conception of family and even of society (many South Indian Christians continue to observe caste rules among themselves, as if they were Hindus still), same habits of hospitality, same domestic art (identical alpanas drawn before the threshold) same style of public processions; it is only the deities who differ, and their respective places of worship — typically Dravidian-style temples and, on the other hand, pseudo-Gothic and pseudo-Norman churches, like spots of Western Europe clumsily stuck into an Indian setting. His personal name also differentiates at once a Dravidian Christian from a Hindu.

But in Bengal and in the North, Christians call themselves more and more by Indian names, and the apparent distinction, at least in educated society, seems to, be growing lesser and lesser.

But the strong minority in India at large, the minority which has created a problem, is that one represented by the Mohammedans. How about them?

It is easy, nowadays, to speak of the “anti-national” feelings of the Indian Mohammedans; easy, but not always fair. We are not considering here the religion, but the people. There seems to be scarcely more foreign consciousness among the thousands of average Indian Musulmans than genuine Indian consciousness among the thousands of average Hindus. May be they are two nations *in theory*, that is to say that an infinitesimal number of people on each side, — and mostly people of foreign education and outlook, — may have good reasons for wishing them to form two nations and for inciting them to hate each other. But they certainly are not two nations in fact.

To those who say they are we would ask to show us in what way there is, between a Hindu Bengali fisherman and a Musulman Bengali fisherman the same difference as between a German and a French fisherman; or between two Bengali peasants, one a

Hindu and the other a Musulman, the same difference as between a German and a French peasant. They speak the same language, — just as the Christian and Musulman Slavs of Bosnia do, in Europe, — and live the same life. Only a few exterior details differ, and that not always. Their superstitions naturally differ, but to the extent to which they have any real *religious* experience, any intuition of God, that experience, that intuition, is of the same nature, for the essence of religion is always the same. And as for the main thing which is, everywhere, the basis of nationality, namely national consciousness, what to say about it since it does not exist, apparently, among the Indian masses, whether Hindu or Mohammedan? An average Indian Mohammedan knows he is a Mohammedan. But if Islam, historically speaking, is a culture, it is certainly not a nation. And was it even a culture, distinct from that of the other Indians, to the eyes of the humble Indian Musulman, before he was told so by his foreign-educated leaders?

The average Hindu is still worse, for far from feeling himself *an Indian*, he does not even feel himself a Hindu, but a member of some narrow group of families connected by their unrestricted interdining and intermarriage, of some caste. And a

caste is anything but a nationality.

It is therefore distorting facts to parallel a Hindu and a Musulman of India with two men of different nationalities. It would be more correct to say that they are both men without any nationality yet, as we have already said.

And even their religious and social antagonism is often farfetched. We still see numbers of low caste Hindus taking an active part in the rejoicings of their Mohammedan comrades at the time of Mohurram. Why not? Hinduism, being no "religion" in the ordinary sense of the word, forces no fanaticism whatsoever upon its followers. But there is more to say; though Islam *is* a religion, and a very exclusive one too, in all matters where "idolatry" is concerned, we often used to see Musulmans taking an active part in widespread Hindu festivities such as the Durga Puja in Bengal, or the Jagannath Chariot festival. We can see them still do so wherever intensive communal propaganda has not poisoned their minds. We have seen ourselves, in Midnapur, in 1939, Musulmans pulling the Jagannath Chariots through the streets, along with their Hindu brothers. They were not doing so *as Musulmans* but simply as Bengalis, sharing in public processions and rejoicings as old as India itself.

In the fratricidal propaganda of a few Hindus and Mohammedans, more interested in government jobs for their relatives and friends than in either Hindu “culture” or Mohammedan “faith,” and in the constant encouragement of such propaganda by those outsiders who have interest to maintain India constantly divided, lie the roots of the so-called irremediable Hindu-Moslem antagonism and the origin of the idea of two Indias.

In the spontaneous fraternity of Hindus and Musulmans, — and Christians, wherever they are in notable numbers; as in the South, — who share the same dreary life, the same popular rejoicings, the same sunshine and the same soil, lies the unconscious answer of real living India to those who are about to misguide her people. And as an echo of that great voice of the land, rises the voice of the few who love India more than seats in any Assembly, more than money, titles and influence under any government, nay, more than their personal souls; “Nation first, religion afterwards. No god is worth the sacrifice of reborn India before his altar.”

That is also what we believe. We know India is not yet a nation. But we intensely want her to become one as soon as possible, so that she may claim, in the world, the place that she should have, — and back her claims by force if necessary.

But before that can happen, all Indians must be made to realise that they *are* one heart and one will.

Chapter 2

THE HINDUS' FAULT

The shortcomings of the Mohammedans, their religious “fanaticism,” their “anti-Indian” spirit, their meaningless aggressiveness towards the Hindus are common topics, nowadays, in public meetings as well as in private conversations, wherever a few Hindus are gathered.

The one thing we forget to put sufficient stress upon is that it is *entirely our own fault* if, in India, there are any Mohammedans and Christians at all.

It is of no use saying that the Mohammedans are conquerors, settled foreigners like the British, and worse than the British since they have destroyed quite a number of priceless works of Hindu art, while the British have not. The destruction of works of art is always regrettable, whoever may be the

author of it, but statues and shrines are less important than the culture which they represent. And when we say the culture, we mean the people. For a dead culture which nobody lives up to any longer is no better than a deserted ruin; while if the people remain alive, with their collective consciousness, then, no matter how many shrines are destroyed and palaces and fortresses burnt, the nation and its culture will survive and build new shrines, new palaces, new fortresses.

If the Musulmans of India were but settled foreigners, the Hindus would have nothing to deplore save the treason of Jaya Chand seven and a half centuries back, and the uselessness of a special caste, set apart and trained for war since the dawn of Indian history, yet unable to hold back the artless Turkoman warriors, who had never formed a special caste. The defeats at the hands of the Turkomans, Pathans and Moghuls, would have been a few more Hindu defeats among many, the ruins of Somnath and of Chittor a few more Hindu ruins among many, but there would have been, for the Indians, no possibilities of becoming two nations, — no communal antagonism, no communal award, no Pakistan scheme, no Hindu-Moslem problem..

All these co implications have arisen because, out

of the contact of India with Islam, something much worse than open war has resulted, and that is the formation of a *separate* Musulman society comprising today more than eighty million Indians. Mohammedan invaders are responsible for the destruction of Somnath and numberless other shrines, that is true. But the Hindus alone are responsible for the development among them of a growing Mohammedan society, *composed of their own people* and yet separate from them, susceptible of becoming hostile to them. The Hindus are responsible for not having even tried to retain and absorb the Mohammedans, — and later on the Christians, — in the same way they had absorbed so many people of various creeds in the past., when they were still a mighty living race.

Is it not puzzling to think that the Persians of Darius, the Greeks of Alexander, (or, better say, of Euthydemus) the Sakas, the Kushanas, the Huns, and all those who in turn came to India as invaders *before* the Mohammedans, were absorbed and that they disappeared in the bulk of the Indian population as many mountain water-falls into the Ganges; although *they were* foreigners, while those *Indians* who, for one or another reason, accepted the Mohammedan or the Christian faith, were never absorbed? We do not speak of the Musulman invaders themselves,

nor of the Europeans, but of their converts. Whatever they may say, there is Iranian blood, Greek blood, Hunnish blood in the veins of many orthodox Hindus. Caste was not then a sufficient barrier to prevent the fact. Why is it *now* considered as a sufficient barrier to exclude from Hindu society all Indians whose fathers have once adopted a foreign faith, or merely derogated from certain customs? Were Mihirgula's savage hordes, by chance, nearer to the Hindus than the "Pir Ali Brahmans" of Bengal were, when they were socially ostracised, or than Michael Dutta was, when he became a Christian? And if the former were good enough to be absorbed, how is it that the latter were not good enough to be retained?

One would probably reply that those Huns etc. . . . who were absorbed "became Hindus" (accepted one of the innumerable Hindu forms of worship and some elements, at least, of Hindu life and culture) while the Indian Mohammedans and Christians are, originally, just the opposite: born-Hindus who have "outcasted themselves" by accepting a "foreign creed."

The argument does not stand the test of analysis. First, there is no creed, however "foreign" which all-embracing Hinduism cannot accept as one of the

possible solutions of man's religious problem. Hinduism is such a vast and complex bulk of all kinds of religious and non-religious thought that one doctrine more or less does not make much difference to it. Islamic strict monotheism and Christian Trinitarian belief are not, properly speaking, to be ostracised; nothing is. Moreover, there seems to be a lesser gap between the outlook of a Vaishnava and that of a Christian, for instance, than between that of a Vaishnava and that of a Shakta; and as for Islam also, certainly a lesser gap between Sufism and the teachings of many Hindu "bhaktas" than between those and other Hindu teachings. It is therefore *not the doctrines* of the Mohammedans and of the Christians which have prevented the Hindus from considering them as a part and parcel of their collective body.

Then, what is it?

It is nothing else but the rigid structure of Hindu society itself.

The very conception of caste as it exists *now* is the insurmountable barrier against all attempts of absorption, not merely of newcomers, but also of any born-Hindus who, for whatever reason it may be, do not accept, in practice, the existing caste rules.

We, who put India above religion, are sorry to see Ram Chandra Das call himself John Matthews and Svam Sundar Nath call himself Gulam Mohammad. We are sorry, not because these brothers of ours have adopted a new faith (faith is a matter too personal to be discussed.) but because they think that their new faith is a barrier between themselves and us, because they have ceased feeling that they are our brothers just as before. Their new names give a striking expression to that new-born consciousness of aloofness. That is why we object to them. We cannot see in the mere fact of accepting the religious tenets of Christianity or of Islam a sufficient reason to cut oneself off the rest of India by such obvious signs as a foreign name, certain foreign habits in life, an enormous stress put upon foreign literature and thought, etc. With our deep-rooted Hindu belief in the equivalence of all religions, we can well understand a man who changes his faith and cult in order to step into a different civilisation; but the contrary is not necessary; so why should a man change his civilisation as a consequence of a change of faith? That we cannot realise.

But we never put the question: "Are John Matthews and Gulam Mohammad responsible for their foreign names and foreign habits, if any, and

their ignorance of everything, Hindu, or are *we*? Have they asked to be “detached from India and her culture”? Have they told us to no longer look upon them as brothers? Have they deliberately wished to “change their civilisation”? Have they refused to be absorbed by us? Or, on the contrary, is it not *we* who have never treated them as brothers, even when they were Hindus, never considered them as part and parcel of *our* India, never given them the shadow of any culture at all, never cared to absorb them, when it was still time, or even refused to do so? We must think of that.

Many will say: Hinduism is liberal. Nobody ever got into trouble with us on account of his religious faith. Even Musulmans and Christians of Hindu birth could have remained within the Hindu fold, had they not been so “fanatical” from the very beginning (insisting that their God is the right one and that ours are all false) and eager to force their doctrines on to other people. Had they not also thrown off their caste, we could have kept them.

We hear such statements, indeed. But let us consider facts as they are. In the South, at least, up to this date, many Indian Christians have not given up their former caste mentality. They continue

observing caste rules among themselves, as if they were Hindus still. They *are* Hindus still, except for their Latin or Hebrew names. Are they any the better for all that, as regards their *social* relations with other Hindus? Are the Hindus of the same caste, who have not adopted a foreign faith, prepared to interline with them, even if their diet be as pure as their own, and to marry their children to theirs, if worthy in all respects? Certainly not. So it is not exactly *they* who have rejected their caste; it is Hindu society (including Untouchable society, as caste-ridden as the rest) which has rejected them.

Mohammedans and Christians are supposed to be “fanatics.” If “fanatical” be synonymous for proselytising, then all creedal religions, — including the numberless creeds which a Hindu may follow without losing caste, — are “fanatical.” Hinduism is not a creed, as each one knows. But Vaishnavism is, Shaktism is, etc. A Vaishnava is as eager to see his friends and acquaintances and the world at large follow Vaishnavism as a Christian is to see them follow Christianity. Sri Krishna Chaitanya’s great disciple, Haridas, was a convert from Islam, and he was not the only one. The only difference is that, *since then*, caste has stiffened

proselytism, even among the Vaishnavas, and the world at large, for them, practically if not religiously speaking, is limited to Hindu India, while a Christian's world or a Mohammedan's world is not. All creedal religions are, in spirit, world-wide brotherhoods; they are not necessarily so in fact. Any man who has accepted Christ is a Christian and, *religiously speaking*, looked upon as such everywhere; but it is doubtful if he will, *socially*, be treated as a brother in money-ridden Europe, if he has no money, or in caste-ridden South Indian Christian society, if he belongs to a low caste. Any man who believes in the "avatar" Sri Chaitanya is a Vaishnava, religiously speaking; but it would be difficult to persuade an Indian Vaishnava to always treat that man socially as his brother, whoever he may be; the example of Sri Chaitanya himself is not constantly eloquent enough for modern Haridases to be welcomed in numbers. Caste mentality has reconquered the Vaishnavas. The Mohammedan converts and their descendants seem to be the only ones in India (and perhaps in the world) to have thoroughly shaken it off. Any man who has accepted the message of Islam is a Mohammedan and treated as such, always and everywhere, religiously *and* socially, by his Mohammedan brothers. It is therefore easy to

understand, at first sight, that Mohammedan converts were kicked out of Hindu society from the very beginning. It is not their proselytising; spirit which cut them off from it, but their refusal to live according to caste rules.

* * *

But then, how about the Christians? How is it that a Hindu who becomes a Vaishnava is still a Hindu while a Hindu who becomes a Christian is no longer one, even if he be one of those who contribute to the persistence of caste mentality among the Indian Christians? If Hinduism has no creedal quarrel with any religion, why does a man's faith in Christ suddenly become a sufficient ground to reject *him*? And since he seems so eager to keep his caste mentality in the midst of democratic Christendom, why does his former caste not keep him within it, and within aristocratic Hindudom, apparently more suited to his temperament?

The answer is that, no doubt, no particular creed or faith, no sectarian spirit whatsoever *in religious matters* is sufficient to turn a Hindu out of orthodox Hindu society *as long as he sticks to the rules and regulations of his caste*. But, reversely, no caste mentality,

however strong, no will to remain a Hindu, however firm, is sufficient to retain a Hindu within orthodox Hindu society, as soon as he breaks in any way the rules and customs of his caste. And let us not forget that social ostracism, among the Hindus, is hereditary, and that caste rules are easy to break.

The Christian converts, as well as the Mohammedans, were not thrown out of Hindu society because they form proselytising sects; Hinduism fears no *religious* proselytism. They were thrown out because there were some customs commonly observed by all the members of their caste, some particularities in diet, in dress, in social dealings, which they no longer would observe after their conversion. They would resent eating sacrificial meat, would dress their hair in a different way, would use certain conveniences of foreign origin. Many Christians, we have remarked, in the South, observe still nowadays, among themselves, their old caste restrictions at the time of marriage. But this (and a few other customs) could have never been sufficient to keep them within their former Hindu caste. There are so many little things which they do not observe, either because they do not wish to or because their foreign-educated (formerly altogether

foreign) priests do not allow them to do so. They may, occasionally at least, eat defiled food. (Food is very easily defiled, to the eyes of the orthodox Hindus.) Their womenfolk wear a “caste-mark” in the middle of their forehead, at home. But the catholic priests, — who do not mind them sitting, in church, apart from the “Untouchable” Christians, — do not allow them to go to church with that caste-mark; so they take it off once a week. And the men do not wear any marks at all upon their faces.

All these little things seem most futile. To the eyes of politically-minded people, citizens of free nations, who have other work to do, they are ridiculous trifles. But to the bulk of the Hindus of foreign-ruled India, they are sufficient to perpetuate a feeling of aloofness between those who observe them and those who do not, to create “communities.” For the Hindus, unfortunately, are not politically-minded; to their eyes, in general, petit caste distinctions and subtle observances concerning diet, dress, details of private life, stripes on the forehead in one direction or the other are still, apparently, more important than the very existence of Hindudom itself. That is practically the one and only reason why, for the last one thousand years, Mohammedan

and Christian converts were never yet absorbed by the Hindus as previously even foreign elements had been.

* * *

We accuse the Christians of building their churches in a foreign style. We accuse them of often bearing “English” names, — which in reality are as often Hebrew or Latin as Anglo-Saxon. It is not their fault, but ours. The missionaries from over the seas built the first churches in India, and as they were as much the agents of a foreign civilisation as the promoters of a foreign religion, it is only natural that *they* built accordingly their houses of worship, their schools etc. It is only natural that *they* should force Hebrew, Latin or Anglo-Saxon names upon the newly baptised Hindus, and we can look upon them as liberal when they did not do so. But how about us?

It is we who have pushed our Hindu brothers into the churches of pseudo-Gothic or pseudo-Norman style, built by foreigners, by shutting to them the doors of our beautiful Indian-style shrines. At the entrance of the sacred enclosure where the precious Hindu symbol of God shines in the darkness, we

have put up placards in all the languages of India: “No admittance for Untouchables.” But the Untouchables need a visible symbol of God. They need it indeed more than the other Hindus do, to the extent that they are supposed to be less spiritually-minded than them. We refuse them ours. The missionaries from over the seas offer them theirs.

The shrine is not built in Hindu style. But the Untouchables, (and many a “Touchable” with them) are little impressed by architecture. We never cared to train them to be impressed by anything we consider beautiful. So they go to church. We never allowed them to read Sanskrit. So they read Latin, — or more often Arabic. Try to put yourself in their place; would you not do the same?

We ask Ram Chandra Das what relation there is between his belief in Christ and his calling himself John Matthews. He answers that he changed his name because the priest of his new religion told him to do so. But that is no answer; why did he listen to the priest? He listened because he was not proud of his Hindu name, that is to say, because *we*, his Hindu brothers, have never taught him to be. Forsaken by us, he went over to them. Only natural. And we have nobody but ourselves to thank for it.

Forsaken before his conversion, and therefore a Christian convert, — or more often a Mohammedan; rejected *after* his conversion, and therefore a convert for all times to come.

Culture and society are more or less interlinked everywhere; they are so in India perhaps more than in other countries for here tradition, scriptural authority, tales and teachings as old as the soil are constantly referred to in daily life. It becomes difficult for most people to love a culture (and specially one which they do not know well or do not know at all) while disliking the society which has created it. The Mohammedan and Christian converts and their descendants dislike or treat with contempt the culture of the Hindus which they do not know but through Hindu society. The essential of Hindu thought is judged by them in one breath with the most undesirable social accretions, and often with the selfish actions of individual Hindus.

And if anybody remarks that such things have little to do with “real Hinduism” the non-Hindus are entitled to say: “Then, of what use ‘real Hinduism’ is *to us*? If hardly any man lives up to it,

it is but a scientific curiosity. *Our* religion, with its less lofty philosophy, is at least a living one.” What will we answer?

The best answer would be to treat *socially* every Hindu as a brother and every Indian as a Hindu; to invite them to our gatherings, to open our temples to them; to cast aside every custom, every idea which maintains aloofness between them and us; to try to know them and let them know us. We would then see the differences wear out little by little. The Hindu sense of relativity would gradually conquer the non-Hindus, and their spirit of brotherhood would gradually conquer us. “They need it,” you say. We need it no less. John Matthews and Gulam Mohammad, when allowed to mix freely with us, will like us, if we make ourselves lovable, and like our culture too, if we know how to show them that it is both beautiful and essentially Indian, — and still alive. They would themselves get to desire to call their children by Indian names and build their places of worship in Indian style. How can they do so while we constantly remind them that we do not look upon them as Indians? We accuse them of having no Indian patriotism and we forget that it is ourselves who have knocked it out of them, and who are doing all we can to keep

it from coming back.

But can one be astonished at the way we treat Indian Mohammedans and Christians, when for more than a thousand years we have hardly treated any better those whom we now claim to be ours through and through? We do not speak of the so-called Untouchables. Our attitude towards them has been criticised enough. There are other victims of our social fanaticism, namely the Indian Buddhists. "He is a Hindu, — says the Hindu Mahasabha, — whoever follows an Indian cult or accepts any faith, any doctrine originated in India." According to this, every Indian Buddhist is a Hindu. One of them was welcomed as the president of the Hindu Mahasabha, at one time. And there are, nowadays, Hindu patriots who, beyond the glamorous vision of Greater India, look up to a still broader one, identifying their Indian pride with an East-and-Middle-Asia feeling and regarding as "Hindu lands" not merely Java and Cambodia, but Burma and Tibet, China and Japan, the whole of Indo-China and the South Seas. We hear much talk about "Buddhism as the unifying force of Asia" among nationalist Hindus. And to them, Buddhism means specially: Indian influence abroad, — the building force of Greater Hindusthan.

But how did we treat the Indian Buddhists in the days when Greater India was a reality, long before we needed to invent the Hindu Mahasabha?

To get the reply, consider the map of India. The two great strongholds of Mohammedan power nowadays, Punjab and Bengal, were the great centres of Indian Buddhism, once; Afghanistan was too, so was the “North-Western Frontier Province,” with Purushapur (Peshwar) and Taxila, famous seats of Buddhist culture. It seems that wherever there is, now, on Indian soil, a large Mohammedan population, there was, formerly, a large Buddhist population. The very dress which characterises the Bengali Mohammedans, — the coloured “lungi,” — is the dress of Burma and of Java, a Buddhist dress. There is a reason behind this: all these Mohammedans’ ancestors were converts from Buddhism. And it is mainly if not solely the Hindus’ fault if they have become converts. One example will show what we mean.

While foreign Mohammedan power was first rising in Bengal, a widespread propaganda was carried on there by the Buddhists themselves. It was “shown” that the invaders had come to

“deliver” the Buddhists from Hindu oppression.* Nonsense, of course. But it worked well and contributed not a little to the Islamisation of the province, The question is: “Why could nonsense work so well?” and the answer: “The Hindus’ fault.”

Bengal, with its hardly Aryanised population, was one of the most flourishing centres of Buddhism. For years, after the breakup of Harsha’s great empire, it had been prospering under the government of the indigenous Buddhist Pal dynasty when, in the eleventh century, the Sens rose. The Sens, as we said, were strict Hindus; the Bengalis were not. They were a part of growing Greater India with a very little admixture of aristocratic blood. By temperament as well as by tradition, they did not understand the blessings of a rigid caste system, and therefore did not feel the need of it. Ballala Sen took into his head to teach them better manners. As at home they had, apparently, no Brahmins to revere, he introduced a few from outside, and undertook to thrust all the intricate code of caste rules and regulations

* See: — “Shunya Puran,” last section (Sri Niranjaneer Rushma) page 232 to 236, in the Bengali edition by Charu Chandra Banerji published by the Basumati Press. See also the “Dharma Puja Vidhana,” edited by the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad.

upon his simple tasteless people. They failed to appreciate his attempt. Tension increased between the overwhelming majority of the indigenous populations — both Buddhists and aborigines — and the strongly caste-conscious Aryanised Hindu governing class. Result? The idea of “Hindu oppression” — which shocks us so much, — was a familiar one to the eleventh and twelfth century Bengali Buddhists, and their hopes were not ours.

When the Mohammedans actually came, the Buddhists had to side either with the Hindus or with them. *We* proclaim in the Hindu Mahasabha meetings, (now we have learnt what unity is worth) that every Indian Buddhist, or even every Buddhist at large, is a Hindu. But the Sens did not think so. Nor did the few Hindus of Bengal, in their days. So that “to side with the Hindus” was not so easy for a Bengali Buddhist *then* as it is for us to criticise him *now*. The Greek Christians of Byzantium did not suffer at the hands of the Latin Christians what the Bengali Buddhists did at the hands of the Hindus; for theirs were religious and political grievances, *not social ones*. And yet, we know that when the Latins offered their help to the Greeks against the besieging Turks on the condition they would accept the Latin Church’s claims, the Greeks,

about to lose their existence as a nation, answered with one voice “Better Mohamed’s turban than the Pope’s tiara.” The Buddhists of Bengal thought: “Better the savage Afghans than the refined Hindus with their caste system.”

Any of us would have thought the same in their place. Persecuted from both sides, it was very difficult for Bengali Buddhism to continue flourishing. And of two societies, the one which offers the greatest opportunities to rise seems the best to the eyes of downtrodden people. Side with the Hindus? Why? To be treated as untouchables? To remain, whatever they do, frustrated of the privileges of caste citizenship? Not worthwhile. It was easier and more profitable to become the brothers of the savage Afghans; and so they did. That is one of the reasons why there are so many Mohammedans in Bengal, and in the whole of North India also. Now we need them to make number (for we have learnt the value of number) we call them back in the name of Indian nationalism. We even appeal to them in the name of the brotherhood of Greater Hindusthan, — the brotherhood of half mankind, broader even than that of Islam. Broader it may be, but less real. And we come too late. Why did our predecessors not say *then* that “every Buddhist is a Hindu” and treat

him accordingly? Had they done so, had *we* also done all what we should have done; had *we* so-called Indian nationalists, treated our Musulman brothers as Indians during even these last fifty years; had we given them the opportunity to know us, to appreciate us, to work with us; had we taught them that our past, our culture, our India are *theirs* no less than ours, and given them every opportunity of personal development on national lines, along with ourselves, then, we would not have now to fight against any Communal Award, or Pakistan scheme; we would not need a Hindu Mahasabha. It serves us right.

* * *

Before accusing the Indian Mohammedans and Christians of not loving our culture, which is the culture of India, we should accuse ourselves of loving it with a narrow selfish spirit unworthy of it. Before accusing them of “not being Indians” we should accuse ourselves of the same. For most Hindus are not half as consciously Indians as an average Turkish Musulman is consciously a Turk. We talk more and more about Indian nationalism; but if there really were in our hearts anything of

the kind, our society would not be what it is. We would not put so much stress upon trifles and put more upon questions of importance, like grownup men and women do, in all mature nations.

We accuse our brothers of leading a Pakistan conspiracy for the “vivisection of India.” How about us? For us, in Bengal, it is a great point as to know whether a Brahman priest of a lower order (who officiates for the Sahas, a caste of people from whom a high caste orthodox Hindu would not accept even water) should be allowed or not to enter a temple built by common subscriptions both from the Sahas and the Kundus* (another caste of people from whom high caste orthodox Hindus can accept water, but not rice). Another question arises as whether the priest, if allowed at all to enter, should permit himself to cross the threshold of the sanctuary or remain on the verandah. For us, in Madras Presidency, it is a great point as to know whether an Iyengar Brahmin should give preference to Scriptures in Sanskrit over Scriptures in Tamil and end the stripes of his “tilak” just above his nose, or

* Allusion to the trouble which arose about the Gaur-Nitai temple, in Puran Bazar, Chandpur (Tipperah District) in 1938 and 1939. The Hindu Mission of Calcutta carried on there, on that occasion, a long reform campaign.

whether he should not better give preference to Scriptures in Tamil over Scriptures in Sanskrit and stretch his forehead mark half an inch lower. Another question is whether the Iyengars, who worship Vishnu and his Incarnations, and draw the three stripes of their “tilak” vertically, are higher in rank than the Iyers, (worshippers of Siva, who draw their triple lined forehead-mark horizontally) or the Iyers higher in rank than the Iyengars. Great controversies! We are busy with such nonsense instead of striving with all our might towards the sole honourable aim of a subject race: our country’s independence, at any cost and by any practical means. We accuse Mr. Jinnah and Co. of attempting to vivisect India; but *we* vivisect India at every step of our social life.

Our over-aged caste system has kept us from becoming a nation. Our “spiritual” temperament (a polite word for laziness) and our widespread nonviolence (a polite word for cowardice) have kept us permanently dependent. Quarrels about the nature of the Unknown and the shape of our forehead-marks have diverted our thoughts and energy from our one and only natural craving: the craving to be free, to be strong, to be great.

We say: “Mother and Motherland are more

exalted than Heaven” but we teach India’s starving millions that our common Motherland is *their* hell, namely the place where the forgotten sins of their past lives have landed them to suffer and purify their souls, — while *we* exploit their labour and help the foreigners to exploit us. And then we accuse them of anti-patriotism as soon as they become Mohammedans or Christians and escape our control. Shameless hypocrites indeed we are, and we are paying for it.

But India is paying for it too; that is the tragedy of the matter.

England, Germany, Japan, America discuss their vital interests while we lose our time over trifles; they build aeroplanes while we build “dharmashalas” and “maths” — and sometimes fine houses for ourselves; they make history while we organise protest meetings against “anti-Hindu,” “anti-national,” “anti-constitutional” municipal bills. They lead the world while we and our Musulman brothers are busy with the everlasting Hindu-Moslem problem. Why not try to solve the problem once forever, and then think of something more constructive?

We know that our non-Hindu brothers have many a justified grievance against us, and that it is us, not them, who, in the past, have done the

most fundamental harm to the common cause of Indian national unity. The basis of social organisation among the Hindus, that is to say rigid division of people into small water-tight groups, is the greatest obstacle to the formation of nationality in the modern sense of the word. This stiff social frame has to be loosened if we want India to live as a great nation in the world of today. And we mean to do our best. But one-sided effort is not sufficient to bring out a lasting result. There are truths which our non-Hindu brothers have forgotten no less than we have, if they ever were conscious of them. We *all* have to set aside our mistakes of the past and build afresh. It was of no use hiding our faults; it is of no use either wasting time in lamenting over them too long. The best is to let the bitterly earned experience guide us in the future, so that similar blunders should not be repeated.

Everyone has to pay for his blunders. A thousand years of foreign yoke have been the salary of our faults. It sounds as if that is enough. It is of no use persisting in the old ways which can only make this state of things last longer.

Chapter 3

RELIGION, POLITICS AND NATIONAL CULTURE: THE EXAMPLE OF THE FREE NATIONS

We mean by the word “religion” that which every religious-minded person considers essential, namely the relation between man and God or, more broadly speaking, the path that a man follows in view of his spiritual progress and salvation.

In this precise sense, most of the commonly called “religious” customs, practices, prejudices, discussions etc. . . . are not religious at all. They are social, ethical or metaphysical. They concern people’s group organisation, division of labour, individual and collective hygiene, moral conduct, logical reasoning and abstract fancies; but they have little to do with what religious intuition recognises as the *soul*. They are worldly topics in which man’s immortal (and eternal) self is not involved.

Every so-called religion contains something definitely religious along with an enormous amount of

things which would be better characterised as law, philosophy, custom etc.. The religious core is the solid part, which remains (or at least is supposed to remain) the same. The rest has an historical and a geographical value. From the religious point of view, it is much less important. It might, at most, “help” certain people in their spiritual evolution under certain circumstances and at a certain time. But *it has no absolute value, from the spiritual standpoint.*

In each one of the great “religions” the properly religious part is *personal*. It lies between each individual human soul and God. It would be a sacrilege, to ask any man to give up that which, in his “religion,” is purely religious. Therefore we do not attempt to do so. We do not ask a Christian, whether Indian or foreign, to give up his belief in salvation through Christ, nor a Mohammedan to give up his belief in the transcendence and oneness of God as revealed by the Prophet; nor do we ask the Sivaites, the Saktas, the Vaishnavas, the Sikhs, the Jains, the Buddhists or any people on earth to give up an inch of their *religious* knowledge.

We only ask them to *not* mix up “religion” with such worldly affairs which do not concern it. Our souls would be better off if only we knew how to

keep religion in its place. So would India. So would the world.

The things which concern the world and not the immortal man, and which we too often mistake for “religion,” can be roughly divided in two groups on one side, politics, on the other, culture:

Few people are actually religious-minded, even in India, and among those who are, very few possess a religious experience. But they imagine they do, because they have heard a lot of talk about religion and read a few books, perhaps. It is fiction, it is philosophy, it is culture that they speak about as “religion.” And as it is difficult to separate culture (a group product) from the idea of group and, nowadays, of nation, which is at the centre of political thought, it follows that we constantly use the name of religion in purely political controversies.

There is a lot to say in defence of the Hindus who do so, for there is no such thing as a Hindu religion. There is no one creed, no one religious path common to all the Hindus; the culture of our common Motherland is the only link between us.

But our Christian and Mohammedan brothers should know better. What they have in common is a particular religious faith, — a spiritual revelation. They should understand that the things of

this world have no power to deprive them of such a treasure, and be less concerned over group-interests. Or at least, they should be concerned over group interests as members of a worldly group, — of a nation, — not as Christians or as Mohammedans. In other words, our politics and their politics should be the same: *Indian* politics; and our religion, whether Musulman, Christian, Vedic, Sivaite, Buddhist, Vaishnava, or any other, if religion it be, should be *personal*.

Let us consider for a while the subject of our recent quarrels: the Communal Award and the Pakistan scheme.

We have admitted that we are greatly responsible for the waste of time and energy over these topics by not having given, in the past, sufficient opportunities to the Musulmans. A Musulman of merit is perfectly justified, — as justified as a Hindu, if of equal efficiency, — to claim a job in the Calcutta Corporation, in the University, in the Civil Service or anywhere else. Only he should not claim it as a Musulman, but as an Indian. And the post should not be denied to him *because* he is a Musulman, nor granted to his competitor *because* he is a Hindu, but granted to the fittest Indian and denied to the less fit to hold it. The outlook of a man on the

Invisible should have absolutely no weight in the appreciation of his capacities.

The ideas of separate electorate, of separate nomination for employment, and finally of separate national territory are typical blunders resulting from the mixing up of religion with politics. The reasoning process at the background is the following “The Indians should ultimately become two politically and territorially distinct nations because eighty million of them share a certain idea about God which the others do not.” But why should any particular idea about God urge us to form *in this world* separate *political* groups? We do not form separate political groups on the basis of opinions and theories about material things, apparently much easier to know than God is. We do not say: “All those who believe that the Earth is flat shall vote together and all those who believe it is round vote separately, and they should ultimately form two nations,” or else, “Those who believe in the superiority of homeopathy, in the treatment of diseases, should form a separate political group (and ultimately a separate nation) from those who consider allopathic medicines more effective or solely effective.” This would be ridiculous. Why more ridiculous than our separate electorate, our separate nominations,

and our separate territorial scheme?

There have been, in the past, people persecuted by state authorities for their scientific outlook. But those days are gone. The days of political antagonism in the name of religion are also gone in most civilised countries. It is high time for them to go in India.

Political groups based on differences in scientific outlook would be ridiculous, surely. But is it not easier to know the nature of the Solar system than that of the Force who moves it? And is it not easier to judge between two medical treatments than between two religious attitudes? A common conception of Godhead can, at the most, help to increase sympathy among metaphysically-minded people. It can, by no means, be placed among the building factors of a modern nation.

The doctrine to be preached in present-day India is that of “no distinctions whatsoever on a religious basis, no ‘parties,’ no groups whatsoever in the name of religion.” Religion should remain what it really is: a personal matter. There is a sufficient number of common interests and common hopes to build the Indian nation upon, for us to not break our hearts over the absence of a common faith.

* * *

The essence of religion is as different from the idea of worldly culture as it is from politics. At every protest meeting against recent steps of the Musulmans, our Hindu leaders repeat that we must “defend our culture.” The Mohammedans speak also of their “separate culture,” which they have to “defend.” But, there is a difference, in that respect, between them and us: it is not their “culture” which makes them Mohammedans, but their faith; while it is not our various faiths which make us Hindus, but our common culture. Hinduism is *not* a religion; Islam *is*; so is Christianity. Such people, whose common link lies in a similar deep spiritual experience, should put, as followers of a certain creed, less stress upon language, literature, art, architecture, etc. What would they have to lose *as Musulmans* and *as Christians* if they put the national culture of India above all others, not because we share it, but because it is, in fact, their own culture, the culture of our common Motherland which they have forgotten? They would have nothing to lose. They would still be Indian Musulmans and Christians, probably more

consciously Indian than before, but no less “religious.” While if we were to say goodbye to our tradition of Sanskrit learning, to our worldly arts and thought, we might retain, individually, our conception of Godhead, — just as each Musulman or Christian would, — but we would be less Indian, definitely.

Broadly speaking, all cultures have their value. But each great nation has its own, and loves it. It is because it is Indian that we love our culture. We admit that there are many beautiful cultures in the world. But they are not *ours*. The one which is *ours* we love. Moreover, we do not deny the contribution of the Musulmans and Christians to our common cultural treasure. For instance, the poems of Kutuban, Manjhan, Malik Mohammad Joyashi and other Musulman poets of India, are Hindusthani poems; the same about those of Kalim, Rashaan and their contemporaries. We are proud of them. Their thought, their style are a contribution to our country’s literature. We regret that most Hindus do not know them better than they do. In the same way, we are proud of Fatehpur Sikri; we are proud of the Agra Fort. This is Indian architecture of the greatest beauty. We only wish our Musulman brothers were as proud

of the temples of Bhubaneswar and Puri, Madura, Srirangam and other places, as we are of anything really worth admiring and typically Indian which Indian artists of their creed have built. We only wish they were as proud of the whole of Indian literature, both in Sanskrit and in the different provincial languages, as we are of their contributions in any tongue of our common Motherland. We only wish they were as proud of every Indian painter, writer, musician, dancer, builder, scientist, singer, etc., of every Indian creator of beauty or truth in every sphere, as we are of those of their creed who have enriched India's endless creation.

There was a time, in Europe, when the marvellous sculptures of Greece were looked upon with suspicion by newly converted Christian Greeks. The guide still shows you, in Olympia, a ruined shrine "demolished by the early Christians in the fifth century." But *those days are gone*. Now the Greek Christians are grieved at the idea of what their first co-religionists have done. They are the first people to curse anti-Hellenic religious fanaticism and to spend money and energy over both the study of their old culture and the preservation of their old Greek temples. They even re-erect their broken columns whenever it is possible. In this, great India

should take example from little Greece. Our days of religious fanaticism should disappear too. They have lasted long enough.

When the Musulmans of India, like the Christians of Greece, feel actually grieved at the idea of their brothers in faith destroying, in the past, so many priceless works of art which, however "heathen," were beautiful and were Indian; when they come forward to collaborate with us for the rebuilding of the famous Somnath temple or of the temple of Visvanath in Benares, in a spirit of national reverence similar to that of the Christians who have repaired the ruined Parthenon, then the Hindu-Moslem problem will exist no more. We will all be Indians, and nothing more.

* * *

But why speak of Christian Greece? Why speak of Christian Europe in general, where, since a long time, the use of Christianity has been confined to the private life of its followers?

There are countries nearer to India where *Islam* is the faith of the immense majority of people and yet where religious fanaticism has given way before the spirit of modern nationalism, namely Turkey and

Persia.

No denying that they are “pakka” Musulman countries. Yet what a contrast between their attitude towards religion, politics and culture and that of our Indian Musulmans at large! Mustapha Kemal Ataturk, Turkey’s great national leader, was hailed by Mr. Mohammad Ali Jinnah as “the greatest of Musulmans.” Kemal Ataturk did in Turkey exactly what *we* would like the Indian Musulman leaders to do in India: he put Turkey, as a nation, above Islam, above religion in general; he pushed Islam back to its place, in man’s individual heart, and banished it from the marketplace, from the government building, from public life. Saint-Sophia, the most magnificent of all Greek churches, was used by the Turks as a mosque for more than four hundred and fifty years; but it still stood as a witness of Christian glories; its historic background was *not* that of a mosque. Kemal Ataturk had it turned into a museum. It is Kemal who forbade the wearing of the pan-Islamic “fez” in Turkey; who forced onto every Musulman of Turkey the use of the Turkish language in his prayers, instead of Arabic; — (more natural; more national, also). It is he who abolished “purdah” among the Turkish women; he who had a law passed, so that whichever Turk marries more than one

wife at a time should be prosecuted. And why such drastic reforms, upsetting the whole framework of Islamic civilisation within a few years? Because he considered that they were *in the interest of Turkey*. It mattered therefore little whether they were or not in the spirit of Islamic civilisation. In the eyes of the “greatest of Muslims,” *Turkey* came first, Islam afterwards; for him, the physical, intellectual, social development of his nation were *the* important thing. Islam, or any religion, as a personal concern, was immaterial. The Islamic “faith” — as every other — could do no harm; therefore Kemal Ataturk did not persecute it. But the Islamic (that is to say, medieval Arabic) “culture” had to give way wherever it was in conflict with Turkish national interest, or whenever a desired Turkish “culture” could be expected to take its place.

The case of Reza Shah Pahlavi’s reborn Persia is no less interesting. It should even be more interesting to the Indian Muslims, not merely because there exists a racial similarity between Aryan Persia and Aryan India, but specially because Persia, like India, has a glorious pre-Muslim past. The only difference is that pre-Muslim Persian culture has hardly survived, while pre-Muslim Indian culture is still *the* Indian culture of the present day. We

suppose this proof of its vitality does not make it any the less lovable. Does it?

It may not be totally useless to remember that the reaction of modern national spirit against the predominance of Arabic influence in Persian life and thought is not Reza Shah Pahlavi's invention. It has roots deep in the past. We can trace it, to some extent, in the numerous free-thinking sects of Musulman philosophy originated in Persia from the very day Persia became a "Musulman country"; we find it in Babism, during the last century, and, today, in that astonishingly modern-minded religious and social synthesis which is Bahatism; we find numberless instances of it in modern Persian poetry and literature. The reforms of Reza Shah Pahlavi are only its latest expressions and the most well-known abroad.

What do those reforms consist of? Suppression of "purdah," discouragement of the influence of the mullahs and such people, enforcement of such laws which aim at raising Persia from the level of an oriental-looking economic colony of foreign powers to that of a modern state, perhaps a little less oriental-looking, but more consciously Persian, no doubt; suppression of the international Mohammedan head-wear (the "fez") and enforcement, in its place, of the

Persian “Pahlavi” bonnet, — a detail, but a symbol also. And the most important, from the cultural standpoint, the most significant as a national step, and the most eloquent example for the Indian Musulmans to follow is the systematical exaltation of *all* the Persian past, including the glorious days of the Sapers and Khosrus and those of remote Darius; of all the Persian art and literature, *including the Zoroastrian Scriptures* and the forgotten splendours of Susa and of Persepolis.

Islam is a living force, in Persia, as a religious faith in individual life; but *in national life*, no *faith* whatsoever is given preference, and culturally, the Aryan swastika is gaining land over the Arabic crescent in the country which recalls itself Iran, — not a question of Zoroastrian “religion” against Mohammedan “religion” but of *Iranian nationality* against Arabic cultural colonisation.

We ask our Mohammedan brothers, in India, we ask our Christian brothers, we ask our Hindu brothers, (too often, they also, inclined to forget *India* in the name of some religious idea or superstition) to stop, once forever, quarrelling over the Unknowable; to believe in whatever faith they like or in no faith at all, but, whatever may be their outlook on religion, to not let it interfere with our common social and

national life; to put, in politics, ‘the interest of India alone at the centre of all their activities; to accept, culturally, and to love as their national inheritance, the whole bulk of Indian art, literature, ideals and thought, as far back as the remote Vedic days and even further; to feel themselves Indians in the same way as a Britisher feels himself British or as a German feels himself German etc. . . . ; — just as the modern Turks and Persians feel themselves Turks and Iranians.

* * *

The examples of Turkey and Persia may be of great persuasive value to some of our countrymen because these nations profess the Musulman faith. But if there is any country in the East whose spirit is, (and seems to have always been) what we would like the Indians’ spirit to be as regards religion, politics and culture, that country is Japan.

A country’s progress in free thought can be judged by the idea its people have of the relation between religion, culture and politics. If that be so, we can say that Japan was “modern” in outlook long before Commodore Perry forced her into competition with the wide world abroad; more modern than

Europe, indeed, for a Japanese has always admitted the separation of *religious* faith from politics, on one side, and the indissoluble link between culture and nationality on the other.

Even in an Indian colony abroad (in London or elsewhere) a foreigner soon gets to know who is a Hindu, who is a Musulman, who is a Christian. And not only by their names. They tell you themselves what faith they profess, as if it were the main thing to you. In a Japanese colony abroad, one Japanese does not even know what creed another professes and does not care. If *you* ask, they will find the question queer. As if it made any difference! Are they not all Japanese? When you know *that much*, you know enough to set them in their political and cultural background.

For Japan may, in the course of history, have assimilated more than one "religion"; she may tolerate all creeds. But she has *one* culture and *one* policy; she is *one* nation. That is what we want to become, along with our brothers. And we cannot become *that*, before we behave like the Japanese in our fundamental dealings among ourselves, that is to say, before we look upon one another and upon ourselves *as Indians and nothing more*, considering faith as a purely personal matter and

not even caring to know who is a worshipper of Allah or of Krishna, of Kali or of Jesus Christ.

Faith is a matter of personal interest in Japan (as nowadays in Britain, in France, in Germany) but not so culture and politics. And national politics and national cultural expressions are much more important even in the individual life of each Japanese than religious matters.

In ancient Rome, thousands of Christians suffered martyrdom rather than give a public and merely conventional recognition to the divinity of the Emperor, simply by burning a tiny grain of incense before one of his statues. In modern Japan, Japanese Christians willingly attend ceremonies in the imperial shrines, side by side with the followers of national Shinto and of Buddhism, and with no less reverence. When a new government is formed, the ministers all go and take an oath of loyalty to the Emperor, son of the Sun-Goddess, at the most holy temple of Ise. A ceremony according to Shinto ritual is performed there on that occasion. Another Shinto ceremony takes place in the same shrine whenever the Japanese government has to take some very important step (declare war on another power, or sign a treaty, for instance). Delegates are sent in great solemnity to ask the national Gods their

advice. In either case the instance has never occurred yet of a Japanese objecting to be present at such solemnities on the ground that he is a Christian, and looks upon them as “idolatrous.”

In the same way, there is no *social* separation between those who follow the Shinto cult, — a non-creedal cult much like popular Hinduism, — and the Buddhists; and there has never been. Religious rites at the time of birth and marriage are performed according to Shinto tradition, even in one hundred percent Buddhist families. There is no “disgrace,” no “scandal” and there arises no “problem,” in Japan, if a Buddhist girl marries in a purely Shintoist family or vice-versa, or if a girl brought up in a Shintoist home marries a Christian. Buddhism is a philosophy, Christianity a creed; Shinto is more or less the synonym of Japanese culture. Even if the girl does “become a Christian” that only means that she will adopt the Christian “creed.” That is left to her, because that is immaterial. But, whatever creed she may follow, *nothing will change in her social life*; she will not feel any difference; her children will have Japanese names — not Latin ones, not Hebrew ones, not American ones, — for this is the law of the state; and when they go to school, whatever may be their parents’

personal faith, they will read the Kojiki, record of the lives and deeds of the Japanese Gods and Heroes, — something equivalent, in its style, to the Hindu “Puranas.” And dare one of them say it is “rubbish” because his parents happen to be believers in the Bible! The whole of Japanese society, (his parents, first of all) would soon teach him to be loyal and polite, and to talk more respectfully about the old national Scripture, most venerable, most sacred *because* it is national.

A Japanese may profess any creed, accept any personal philosophy he likes. But his political outlook is national: “All for the glory of the Emperor and the greatness of the Empire”; and his culture is one: traditional Shinto culture, coloured by Indian thought in the past, by Western thought in the present, by all the world’s progress, but unshakably faithful to its fundamental outlines.

* * *

But just try to transpose this national outlook in India and see what happens. You criticise, for instance, an Indian Musulman or Christian who makes fun of the Hindu legends. More than one fifth of the whole Indian population will say that he is

right, not you. Moreover, among those who are likely to stand by you in your criticism, — the Hindus, and not even *all* the Hindus, — the majority will do so for the sake of purely religious reasons, not out of wounded national pride. They will organise a meeting at Sraddhananda Park (Calcutta) to protest against the awful irreverence of a third-rate local Musulman paper in which some unknown journalist has called Sri Krishna “the gay Lothario of Brindaban.” And every speaker will attack either in Bengali or in English, the shameless newspaper which has insulted a Hindu God and the “insensate” government who has left the editor unpunished. They will express their indignation on behalf of the “religious feelings” of the Hindus. But not a word to express the grief of *Indians* when hearing *other Indians* speak lightly of one of the greatest national Heroes; not a word to say that we feel indignant about the local paper’s joke not because Sri Krishna is a Hindu Incarnation, but because he is a very great figure in India’s past, — in that very past which the forefathers of the present-day Indian Musulmans have built, along with the forefathers of the present-day Hindus, — and that his greatness as a man should be sufficient to make his memory sacred *to all Indians irrespective of creed*.

The attitude of our non-Hindu brothers towards Hindu mythology and practices should be the same as that which the Japanese Buddhists and Christians (and Mohammedans too, if any) observe towards Shintoist mythology and practices. No more; no less. This is the way to become *one* nation.

And first of all, all Indians should *know* the essential of Hindu mythology and what it means. In all Indian schools the study of the great national epics, the Ramayana and Mahabharata, should be compulsory. All Indians, whether followers of one of the various Hindu cults or Mohammedans, whether Christians or Zoroastrians, should count the story of Rama, of Arjuna and his brothers, of Krishna, among the impressive remembrances of their childhood — just as young Greeks do the story of Achilles, young Germans the story of Siegfried, young Japanese that of Yamato Dake. Whether history or fiction (or both) the lives of these heroes belong to India's past, and the poems that relate them are masterpieces of old Indian literature. It is a shame for an Indian not to know anything about them, whatever may be his personal creed, if any.

Not only should the national epics and other great works of Sanskrit literature be more or less known to all Indians, but the essential of what can

be said about each one of the most popular of the “Hindu” Gods, Goddesses and Heroes should be known to the non-Hindus; known, not as the Gods of particular community, but as poetic creations of India’s collective self, symbolising unknown realities, and as deified heroes of the Indian soil. Let those Hindus who feel like doing so worship them; but may all Indians, regardless of creed, look upon them with respect, — like the Japanese do upon the Shinto Gods.

If a Japanese Christian has no objection to his son studying the “Kojiki” in school, why should an Indian Musulman or Christian see any harm in his son reading a few stories out of the “Puranas”? *Now* it seems certain that he would object. But he will not when India has become a modern country like Japan or even like the “Christian” countries of Europe; not any more than a modern Roman objects to see his son read about Jupiter Capitolinus and look with respect upon the old deities, creations of the Latin soul, whose ruined temples cover his soil; not more than an Iranian of the present day (a more familiar example for our Mohammedan friends) would object to his son studying the Avesta and whatever is connected with Zoroastrian worship, one of the expressions of the

Iranian soul.

* * *

We want to see the pride of Indian nationality and Indian culture take, in India, the place of religious fanaticism and social superstition; we dream of a day when there will be, among Indians, no cultural, political or social distinctions whatsoever, connected with their different *creeds*.

For that to be achieved, we must have something in common to love; let that be India, with all her beauties, with all her glories, with all her possibilities; we must have something in common to hate; let that be all what opposes itself to India's greatness.

We have a common Indian culture, coloured by all the great thought-currents that have come in touch with it: ageless Dravidian thought, so old that its contribution is indistinguishable from Hinduism itself; Islamic thought; Western thought. Let the Musulmans and Christians of India, let the Zoroastrians, let all those who are *Indians* by nationality without professing any of the religious tenets of the Hindus, share with us that *common Indian culture*, which *is theirs*. To the extent that

they will share it, love it, and be proud of it as we are, India will be theirs as well as ours. Let them take part freely in the time-honoured festivities, linked with Hindu legends, which have been, from century to century, the occasion of public rejoicings. Does not a British atheist buy toys for his children when Christmas comes? And do not Japanese Christians take part in all the popular festivities of their country, regardless of their non-Christian character?

In spite of what most Hindus may think, at present, of such a revolutionary idea, we invite our non-Hindu Indian brothers to enter our temples. We ask them to look upon the deified heroes of India as *theirs* no less than ours; we urge them to force their entry into their shrines, not with a view to destroy or to ridicule their inadequate images, but to pay a public respect to their memory. There should be, at the entrance of our temples, no such notices as: “No admittance for Mohammedans, Christians, Untouchables etc. . . .”; at most we could put up: “None but Indians allowed inside, without special permission.”

Let the “topic” and other such visible distinctions between Musulmans and non-Musulmans, as well as the “tilaks” and other such visible distinctions

between Hindus and non-Hindus disappear from India. Let all Indians, Hindus or not, bear Indian names, including names of national Gods and Goddesses, if they please. No “idolatry” in that. Modern Greeks call themselves Herakles, Artemis, Athena, and are Christians. A German can (and does sometimes) call himself Baldur or Siegfried, and is a Christian. Then why cannot a Musulman call himself Syam Sundar or Ram Chandra, if he be an Indian, and still believe that God is one and that Mohammad is His Prophet? Why cannot all Indian Christians call themselves by Indian names and still believe in Christ?

More we think about it and more we are convinced that the source of all India’s misfortunes lies in her lack of adaptability to new world conditions; in her incapacity to learn quickly enough the great lessons of each epoch. Through subjection or otherwise, over and over again in contact with the leading peoples of the world, India seems to have taken practically nothing from them; at least nothing essential, nothing worth taking. Many praise her for that reason. We do not. Had India, at her first contact with Islam, learnt the lesson of Islam: fraternity, she would have avoided Mohammedan domination, or, at least, freed herself rapidly

from it and become a nation a thousand years ago. Had India learnt from the Europeans the lesson of organised national life, of combined efforts for a common political and economic aim, she would never have fallen prey to the Europeans. And now that the centre of the world seems rapidly shifting from the West to the East, if only present-day caste-ridden, sect-ridden, quarrelsome, chaotic India would learn from Japan the lesson of unconditional nationalism and of iron discipline, then she would become not only an independent nation, but one of the world's great ruling powers.

But are we ready, we pious people, to renounce our controversies over caste-marks in the South, over municipal bills, in Bengal, and over the nature of God, all over India, for the sake of such an earthly ambition?

Chapter 4

OUTLOOK ON INDIAN HISTORY AND ON FOREIGN POLICY

One of the natural consequences of the separation of religious faith from politics and from national life at large would be a radical change in the outlook of the Indian Mohammedans on Indian history.

Up to this date, the outlook of an Indian Musulman on his country's past is Musulman, but not Indian. The periods during which different Musulman powers ruled over India are of a particular interest to him, not because of their importance in the whole history of India's evolution, but mainly if not solely because they are periods of Musulman rule. The glories of the only time when India was not under any foreign rule at all do not seem to thrill him more than if they belonged to Roman or to Chinese history.

We maintain that unless this mentality changes altogether the Musulmans of India can never become

Indians. And it can only change when, in India, religion is put back to its place; when creed ceases to be considered as a collective concern.

We have spoken enough of the shortcomings of the Hindus. The shortcomings of the Musulmans are neither more nor less excusable. Both the presently distinct groups have to sacrifice a lot of their habits of thinking, if they wish to become *one* nation, and the fact that the sacrifices are, no doubt, to be great, on the part of the Hindus, does not minimise the greatness of the duties of the Musulmans and other non-Hindus of India (Christians, Zoroastrians, etc.).

One history, considered from two opposite angles, is equivalent to two histories. The succession of facts known in European history as the "Hundred Years' War" is one and the same. But an Englishman speaks of the battle of Agincourt as a great victory while a Frenchman calls it a great defeat. The mere narration of facts does not count as much as the spirit of the narration; therefore, there may be one narration, but there are two histories.

In the same way, the past of India is one; we have made two histories out of it. To the eyes of the Hindus, Mahmud of Ghazni, Mahmud Ghori, Ala-ud-din Khilji, and later on Aurang-Zeb and

others are cursed enemies, while to the eyes of the Musulmans they become “idol-breakers,” “defenders of the Faith” and national heroes. And Jaya Pal, Prithwi Raj, Bhim Singh, Guru Govind Singh, Sivaji, and all the outstanding Hindus who have opposed Mohammedan power are looked upon as national kings, leaders and heroes by the Hindus, while the Musulmans consider them as opponents, as rebels, and sometimes as traitors.

But *one nation cannot have two contradictory histories.*

Historical events and personalities can be judged in a different light. All Frenchmen have not necessarily the same opinion about the French Revolution or about Napoleon; nor have all Englishmen about Cromwell. But the one and only reason why a French patriot judges Napoleon favourably or not is that, to his eyes, Napoleon has well served or badly served *the real interests of France*. Napoleon’s ideas about the Trinity and salvation have little to do with the matter, as long as France was well served by his policy. The same about the English, the German, the Japanese patriot: the judgement that they pass on the thought currents, the facts or the outstanding personalities of their country’s history depends solely upon what they sincerely consider to

be their country's interest, their country's glory, their country's greatness. There was a time in Europe and in the Near East when "religious" considerations had much to do with people's judgement of the past as well as of the present, a time when *it mattered* to the eyes of his countrymen, if a great man had been a Catholic or a Protestant; when an admirer of pagan glories was looked upon with suspicion. But those days are gone. Nowadays, in all the countries of the world where nationality has a meaning, there is only one criterion granting praise to the dead who have built history, and that is: their contribution to their country's glory.

No modern English Catholic feels his admiration for Queen Elizabeth lessened because she was hard on the Catholics; she made England great; that is sufficient for *all* English people, irrespective of creed, to venerate her memory. The enemy, in the eyes of every English Catholic today, is not her, but Philip II, king of Spain, the champion of Catholicism in his time, *who attacked England*. It does not matter whether he attacked England to save her people's souls from heresy or for another purpose. He is, in British history, a national enemy.

Small countries have no less commonsense than big ones, in such matters. The Greek Christians

look upon Perikles with pride: that great Pagan was a Greek. And they look upon the Bulgarian kings who fought theirs all through the Middle Ages as national enemies, although they were Christians, and belonging to the same church as themselves.

And if there is a country that can beat the West in intelligent patriotism, it is that proud Archipelago of the remotest East: Japan. According to a current story, a Japanese Buddhist, questioned by a foreigner as to what he would do if, by miracle, he saw the Buddha himself at the head of Japan's enemies, answered without hesitation: "I would kill him." But there is no need of referring to fantastic tales, however eloquent. Reality is eloquent enough. Ask a Japanese Christian, — there are some — what he thinks about Hideyoshi, Ieyasu, or Iemitsu who all three persecuted the Christians to the extent that the Christian faith was, practically, wiped out of the country. He will tell you that those three men were among the greatest of Japanese and probably add, if you mention their merciless persecutions, that "such steps were a necessity in Japan, at that time, *in the interest of the country.*"

That spirit which causes every citizen to look upon the facts and personalities of the past from a point of view which is, at its basis, the same for

all, irrespective of creed, of rank, of province, is exactly *the thing* which keeps a nation together. And unless and until the non-Hindus of India, Musulmans, Christians, Zoroastrians, whatever they may be, get to consider the facts and personalities of Indian history in that light, there will never be *one* Indian history for all Indians, there will never be an Indian nation; there will remain Hindus, Musulmans, Christians, Parsis living in India, — just as now; but there will be *no Indians*.

Compulsory primary education, uniform at least in its fundamentals from one end of the country to the other, would play an immense part in the country formation of Indian nationality. But where is it? And where can it be, until India is independent? Only an independent Indian government with strong national views (and force to back them) could enforce in all schools and colleges *the best* curriculum in general, and particularly the best history text-books for boys and girls who are to be, first of all, young Indians, — and then only young Vaishnavas, young Musulmans, young worshippers of Kali, of Ganesh, of Christ or of anybody else. One can never expect

foreigners, masters of a conquered land, to do anything to make that land take consciousness of its unity, or, still more, to help it to *create its own unity*.

But even if, in a long-desired and perhaps near future, happy circumstances do suddenly make India free, that would not be enough to form one nation, at once, out of her various peoples, and specially out of her two main groups, the Hindus and the Musulmans. That would not be enough if, among other things, these groups persist to consider both the remote and recent past in the light of conflicting communal interests, instead of from one common national standpoint. National education is as much a problem of the future (a problem of independent India) as national foreign relations or a national air force. At present, under alien rule, any national uplift on a broad scale is an impossibility. If anything can be done *now* it has to be done on a small scale. The awakening of a genuine national spirit in India at present means the *conversion of the leaders and possible leaders of all communities to a national ideology*; the conversion of the masses will follow in time.

And if some people tell us that an Indian nation has never existed in the past, we will answer: "It may be so. But then, create one now, so that it

may flourish in the everlasting future.” There was a time when Britain, France, Germany, Italy, did not exist as *nations*. They do now. Why? Because, at some time of the past, their people created them, taking consciousness of what deep common links underlay their acute differences as Catholics and Protestants. There was a time when the French Protestants did not consider it a shame, but a duty, to call for the help of powerful Protestant England against a French Catholic government; and when Catholic Englishmen also did not consider it a shame but a duty to welcome the intervention of Catholic Spain against the Protestant government of England. As long as such an attitude was possible, France and England were not full-grown nations. They have passed that stage. It is high time for India to pass it too, and spring out of her medieval “religious” quarrels, adjusting herself to the political atmosphere of the modern world. More and more numerous are the Indian Christians and Brahma-Samajists who have ceased to look upon British rule from the standpoint from which Keshab Chandra Sen did, when he vehemently hailed it as a “providential blessing.” It is time for the Indian Musulmans also to change their habitual outlook on Indian history and to cease judging their country’s past from

the mere point of view of gain and loss of “Musulman” prestige, irrespective of nationality. If they sincerely wish to live in peace in a united and strong India, they should now begin to realise what a nation means, and consider India’s both remote and recent past solely from the point of view of *Indian* gain and loss, irrespective of the creed of those who played their part in it, irrespective of the interests of any group besides India herself. In one word, it is time for all Indians to look upon the history of India in the same spirit as Europeans, Japanese, and all citizens of full-grown nations look upon the events and personalities of their country’s past.

Just as an Englishman who personally is a Catholic looks upon Queen Elizabeth with pride, as upon a great English ruler; just as any European atheist is proud of the famous Christians who, in war and peace, have made his country glorious, and any European Christian proud of the atheists and Pagans, if any, whose name is a part of his national heritage; just as a Japanese patriot, who personally is a Christian, looks upon the makers of Japan’s greatness, even if they were persecutors of Christianity, so should an Indian who personally professes Islam look upon Prithwi Raj, Dana Pratap

and Sivaji, and all the great Hindus of the past, who lived and fought for the glory of India and her national culture. He should be proud of them as of all great Indians. What ideas these men professed about religion is immaterial. The Hindus, in the same spirit, should be proud of men such as Sultan Tipu, who died in fighting the foreign aggressors of India.

And just as an Englishman, nowadays, even if he be a Catholic, looks upon Philip of Spain as an enemy, because he waged war against England, in the same way should an Indian Mohammedan look upon Mahmud of Ghazni, Mahumd Ghor, etc. as enemies, because they attacked India, never mind for what purpose. He should make no difference between an invader such as Nadir Shah, for example, who attacked "Mohammedan" India, and Mahmud of Ghazni, who drew his sword against Hindus alone. When the Europeans first came to India, many Hindus made the mistake of considering them as "allies" against Mohammedan power. That misplacement of trust proved fatal because, in spite of all possible differences, the men who represented "Mohammedan power" *were Indians*, while the Europeans were not. When all Indians will look upon an enemy of India in the past or in

the present as an enemy, and upon a friend of India as a friend, *irrespective of creed*, then and then alone it will be possible to speak of Indians as one nation, and not of Indian communal groups.

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We have often compared the attitude of our non-Hindu brothers towards our collective past to that of Europeans and Japanese towards theirs. This is not to ask the Indians to imitate the West, — or the East. God preserve us from any servile *imitation* in any direction! But a full-grown nation must have certain characteristics without which it is not a full-grown nation; just as a human being must present certain signs before he or she can be called a grown-up person. An homogeneous standpoint from which all the citizens of the same nation consider their common past is one of the distinctive signs of “grown-up countries.” And India has to grow up, politically, and make haste, not because it is a shame to live in eternal adolescence (it is not), but because it is a dangerous inconvenience, in a wild and tough world full of greedy grown-up countries. On the other hand, it is a risk of life to “fight out” the solution of the Hindu-Moslem problem. It may be

that a Musulman India will rise alone out of the struggle, and send the last Hindus to the Museum. It may be that a Hindu India will survive alone, and pack off the last Musulmans to Baghdad. But it may be also that, while the struggle is going on, one or more of the grown-up nations of the world will strengthen or establish its protective grip upon the whole realm of perennial national adolescence. And that is not the goal we intend to pursue.

Therefore it is better for both Hindus and Indian Musulmans to begin to think, feel and act as citizens of grown-up nations do, and first to acquire, like them, a homogeneous national outlook on the past, — and on the present too; for that is an aspect of national consciousness.

* * *

Present history means: world politics.

The fact is that, generally, as a result of a false education and of tendentious British propaganda, neither Hindus nor non-Hindus, in India, have any political training or any serious up-to-date information about what the world at large is doing. Therefore, they cannot situate India in her natural international setting, and have a well-based opinion

about how, at least, *she should* react, even if she be, presently, incapable of reacting at all.

But the problem is not there. Even while judging wrongly, in fact, we could judge *from the right point of view*, that is to say, in the way the *interest of India* appears to us. But we do not. A few Hindus do, perhaps; and a few Musulmans too. But to any event of international significance, the majority of the Hindus do not react at all, and the majority of the Musulmans react as Musulmans, not as Indians.

That is clear. After the last World War, for instance, a widespread propaganda was carried on in India in favour of the revision of the treaty of Sèvres. Congress Hindus joined the Mohammedans in that campaign with the ultimate aim of strengthening Hindu-Moslem unity by their collaboration; perhaps also with the idea that concessions to the Mohammedan point of view on their part would win them concessions in other matters from the Mohammedans. But whatever may have been the point of view of the Congress Hindus, it is visible that the Mohammedan attitude in that treaty of Sevres business was not a purely nationalist one. For what difference did it make *to India* if the Caliphate was maintained in Turkey or not? And

what difference did it make, also, if Turkey was deprived of certain territories of which most had a definitely non-Turkish population? If the Indian Mohammedans stood in favour of Turkey on the ground that she was treated unjustly (in supposing that she was), why did they not carry on, against the treaties of Neuilly and especially of Versailles, the same campaign of indignation as against the treaty of Sèvres? Bulgaria and Germany were also deprived of territories, — and not only of territories with an alien population. The trouble is that they are not Mohammedan countries, while Turkey is. Therefore treaties which deprived Bulgaria of Dobrudja and Germany of the Sudeten region were not half as bad as a treaty which deprived Turkey of Eastern Thrace and a part of Asia Minor.

The same logic prevails in other instances which it would be easy to recall.

We know that, unfortunately, lack of patriotism, in India, is not a monopoly of the Mohammedans. Many Hindus too derive their attitude towards foreign events, foreign powers and foreigners in general from considerations which have little to do with India's interest, and which are even, most of the time, less impersonal than creedal solidarity. The Hindu Mahasabha has bitterly criticised the pact

between the followers of Subhas Bose and the Moslem League; "Hindu" members would never vote with the Mohammedans in the Bengal Assembly, oh no! But they do not mind voting with the Europeans, occasionally, against both the Mohammedans and the Forward Bloc. Now, this may be a good policy from the standpoint of petty party interest, but it has nothing in common with Indian nationalism.

Individually, whatever the Hindus say or do is generally guided more by considerations of clannish and ultimately personal interest than by anything else, and each one's sympathies and antipathies, in matters of foreign politics, have the same source. This man is a well-wisher of Japan because he thinks his personal ambitions or interests more or less directly served by Japan's rise in power, not because he *dispassionately* realises that Japan is *India's* best friend; and that man is deeply concerned over possible British reverses, not because he actually believes that Britain is India's best friend, but because the possible departure of the British from India might well be the end of his pension as a retired "I.C.S." or the end of his professorship in the University. Or perhaps, his personal fears are great enough to silence his criticism and to persuade him that any British reverse

is an Indian reverse.

But the fact that there is a tremendous quantity of selfish people among the Hindus does not make the attitude of the Mohammedans more Indian. And just as we ask the clannish-minded and selfish Hindus to extend their interest to the whole of India, so do we ask also the pan-Islamic-minded Indian Musulmans to restrict their interest to *India first*. India before persons; India before castes and clans; and also India before world-wide brotherhoods settled on the basis of common religious faith, of common social or political philosophy, whatever they may be. This is our point. And unless, either by propaganda or by force, *this* becomes the view of an overwhelming majority of Indians, there is no hope India will ever become nation.

May our Mohammedan brothers well understand that we do not condemn pan-Islamism especially because it is pan-*Islamism*. We merely condemn it as we do any international "ism" which would incite the Indians to judge national and international affairs from a standpoint beyond that of the sole interest of India. We would reject any "pan-Hinduism" stretched, on an ideological basis, beyond the limits of the Indian world, if such a movement were possible. But Hinduism is not identifiable with

any particular ideology or creed.

In fact, no nation can be the constant torch-bearer of one definite religious, or even social or political ideology or creed. Times change and, with times, a nation's needs. Therefore, whoever is a believer in a *creed* has sooner or later, if the creed be of international scope, to choose between it and his nation. The only thing we urge every Indian to do in such a case is to choose India, — not the creed, whichever it may be.

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