



Nirad C Chaudhuri On The Hindu-Muslim Issue

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Synopsis-

The indisputable historical truth about the Hindu – Muslim confrontation in India is that its very beginning was marked by ferocity and fanaticism on the Muslim side and ineradicable hatred on the part of the Hindus. The Muslim rejects his pre-Islamic past. It is Jahiliya, the period of ignorance. For him, his non-Islamic past was wrong. Islam is open to anyone, irrespective of their background.

Key words- Hindu, Muslim, Islam, destruction, temples, British, unbeliever, intolerance, religion

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Introduction-

Nirad Chaudhuri's essay, 'The Hindu-Muslim confrontation in India' in his book *East is East and West is West* should be studied in depth by all those interested in this persistent problem. It is true that the great majority of Indian Muslims are converted Hindus. Only a minority are descended from the original Arab, Turkish, Mongol and Afghan, Pathan groups. Muslims all over the world constitute a multiracial non-territorial, universal and egalitarian society, united only by a common faith. (Nirad, 203). Al-Bukhari, the compiler of one of the important Hadiths (Kitab al-Jamial-Sahin) was not a Quarish, but born in Bukhara in Central Asia. Nirad states that the Hindu-Muslim opposition is between two comprehensive and totalitarian ways of life, neither of which can admit the validity and legitimacy of the other. The Muslim intolerance is for the unbeliever.

Nirad states:

"The Hindu attitude is static, passive and defensive: the Muslim in stark contrast is dynamic, active and offensive," (203).

Islam divides the world into two distinct halves called them Dar-al-Islam (Land of peace) and Dar-al-Harb (land of strife) Nirad states: "it was the mission of those who had created the hand of peace to make the entire world that by putting an end to the existence of the hand of

strife." The Caliph leads this holy war, Nirad states (204). The first Caliph, Abu Bakr called himself Amir-ul-Muninin – commander of the faithful.

The Muslim rejects his pre-Islamic past. It is Jahiliya, the period of ignorance. For him, his non-Islamic past was wrong. Islam is open to anyone, irrespective of their background.

Nirad observes, "The indisputable historical truth about the Hindu – Muslim confrontation in India is that its very beginning was marked by ferocity and fanaticism on the Muslim side and ineradicable hatred on the part of the Hindus" (209).

Mahmud of Ghazni conquered India around 1000 AD. At Biruni states:

"Mahmud utterly ruined the prosperity of the country (India) and performed wonderful exploits, by which the Hindus became like atoms of dust scattered in all directions, and like a tale of old in the mouth of the old. Their scattered remains Cherish, of course, the most inveterate aversion towards all mentioned. This is the reason, too, why the Hindu sciences have retired far away from those parts of the country conquered by us, and have fled to places which our hand cannot yet reach, to Kashmir, Banaras and other places". (Choudhuri, 210)

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After the Battle of Terrain (1192 AD) Jayanaka, who was at the court of Prithviraja Chauhan. In this Jayanaka describes the Muslim conquest and the desecration of the sacred lake of Pushkar. All the temples in them were demolished. The description of the destruction of the temples at Pushkar is very painful. The poet explains the reason for this because of the decline of Vedic Sacrifices which had weakened the power of the war god Kartikeya. Secondly, it was due to the decision of Vishnu himself to become the Buddha Avatara and preach Ahimsa (Chaudhuri, 211). Chaudhuri states: "This was the last outburst of the Hindu hatred of the Muslims for the time being. After the establishment of Muslim rule in India it could not be voiced openly. But it remained alive and went underground. During the entire period of Muslim rule from 1200 AD to 1707 AD, the date of the death of Aurangzeb, the Hindu hatred was like the glowing lava visible down the funnel of a quiescent volcano." (212). He further observes "The incontestable truth, Chaudhuri states" about the position of Hindus as a community under Muslim rule was that they were a cruelly persecuted subject people, who were at the same time a majority. The hostility of the Muslims to all the higher manifestations of Hindu life was such that they were a cruelly persecuted subject people, who were at the same time a majority. The hostility of the Muslims to all the higher manifestations of Hindu life was that these totally disappeared from the old Aryavarta, the homeland of Hindu life." (213).

During the Islamic period there was a systematic destruction of Hindu temples. No temple in North India, present day Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh and West Bengal were spared. The ban on building new temples was lifted only during Akbar's reign. Aurangzeb razed several temples to the ground. The Muslim rules took away women after every Hindu King was defeated. Jaziya, was the religious tax paid by the Hindus. Chaudhuri states that with the destruction of the upper classes of the Hindus, all the higher manifestation of Hindu civilization disappeared. In the Punjab, the Hindus were for all practical purposes Hindus only in religion and for the rest Muslim. The Arya Samaj did a lot in reviving only in a

minority section The Brahmins and Kshatriya were degraded in North India due to want of patronage in the Uttar Pradesh. Sanskrit scholarship was almost eliminated. Chaudhuri writes about the last quarter of the nineteenth century in the Punjab and the first decade of the twentieth century in East Bengal. Before that the lower classes of the Muslims in Punjab and Bengal were only partially Islamized both in religious practice and social life. After the twentieth century, both the religious practices and social life became Islamized. In cultural life in the UP was dominantly Muslim. The Islamic culture was considered as the cultural elite.

The cultural life in Uttar Pradesh was mostly Muslim. Chaudhuri states that Jawaharlal Nehru was culturally a Uttar Pradesh Muslim, though a Kashmiri Pandit by birth. This was due to the impact of rapid Islamisation of Uttar Pradesh. (218). The Education Ministers he appointed were Muslim. The cultural institutions created by the Government got Muslim chiefs.

Nivad Chaudhuri states that when the British took over from the Moghuls there was a Hindu resurgence (222). This assertion was estimated in the cultural field. All Bengalis used the *Arya* frequently. Bankim Chandra Chatterji, through his novels, contributed to the resurgence of Hinduism in Bengal.

During the British period, there was a glorification of Rajput, Maratha and Sikh opposition to Islamic rule Bankim Chandra Chatterji in his novel *Raj Simha* glorified Shivaji. Bengali Muslims denounced it as an attack on the daughter of Aurangzeb, who was a pouters.

Choudhuri states: "This, however was not the only contribution of Bankim Chandra to the Hindu resurgence of Hinduism in Bengal. He was in a very real sense the most important figure in it as the systematize and exponent of its doctrines, which made the new-Hinduism of the late nineteenth century the conservative confer thesis to the liberal doctrines of Brahmnism. (225).

Ananda Math, Devi-Chaudhurani and *Sitaram* can be considered as the great trilogy of Hinduism in fiction.



Bepin Chandra Pal states in his book *Nationality and Empire*:

Nor can the Indian nationalists absolutely absolve themselves of all responsibility for this unfortunate state of things (the opposition of the Muslims to the nationalist movement) if the Muslim leaders tried to wipe out the memories of the Sikhs and the Marathas the Hindu nationalist leaders also sought to revive them. It was no doubt a supreme psychological need of the nationalist propaganda; and so far as these memories were revived to re-create the self-confidence of a people suffering from a state of hopeless and listless inertia, they did only good and no harm. (P388-89).

Nirad C Chaudhuri states elsewhere that the present Congress party (after 1947) represents the anglicized order. Chaudhuri states: "This is to say, just as the British in India pampered the Muslims and the so-called depressed classes, the Congressites in power are doing exactly the same thing." (283). Chaudhuri supports the Hindu resurgence which is opposed to the pseudo-secular policies of the Congress (283). But he expects the Congress to bribe the minorities, offering them more privileges, to capture and racial power. He states (in the article published in 1994) that "Eventhough the deep-seated xenophobia of the Hindus might be on the side of the traditionalists, all the material advantages are at the disposal of the Congress Government, foreign through it is in a manner of speaking (Chaudhuri, 284). Chaudhuri calls the Congress government of 1994 as the Anglicized order.

Conclusion

It is pertinent to note the conversations of the great nationalist Sri Aurobindo on Hindu-Muslim relations. They can be discovered in his *Evening Talks* (AB Parani). Sri Aurobindo said, "Certainly Hindu-Muslim unity cannot be arrived at on the basis that the Muslims will go on converting Hindus while the Hindu shall not convert any Mahomedan (368). He further said, "Perhaps, the only way of making the Mahomedans harmless is to make them lose their fanatic faith in their religion. (369). In another conversation, he said, "I am sorry, they are making a fetish of this Hindu-Muslim unity. It is no use ignoring facts, same day the Hindus

may have to fight the Muslims and they must prepare for it. Hindu-Muslim unity should not mean the subjection of the Hindus." (369).

We have to revisit cultural critics like Nirad C Chaudhuri to comprehend the complex nature of Islamic fundamentalism. Chaudhuri, by and large, has been ignored and need to be revived to understand out present day dangers.

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