

# Looking Back

## Who Failed Pakistan?

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In this section I will discuss one of the most fundamental questions: After all, who were the people, group, class, community, *biradry* or whatever - who brought us to this state of affairs? Who misled us? What is our own part in this? And what were the reasons? What explanation can be given? In short, who failed Pakistan? The short answer to these questions is: **Urdu Party failed Pakistan**. It was their mindset, which set the trends of the present culture of Pakistan; thereby misguiding the other communities of Pakistan. For this purpose, Islam and full power of the State were used.

Going back, we look at the pre-Partition India. There were sections, not large, "of the Muslim population in the subcontinent who were the progeny of immigrants from other Muslim lands. Throughout the period of Muslim rule, migration from other Muslim countries was encouraged. This was true even in the twentieth century of the Nizam's (State of Hyderabad) dominion. The Muslim rulers were so conscious of the shortage of their manpower that every immigrant was looked upon as an asset. Administrators, poets, theologians, physicians, scholars, engineers, mystics, ordinary soldiers, and even humble craftsmen were all welcome.

There were innumerable families who trace their origin from some foreign settler and all these claims were not ill founded. The largest immigration took place because of the ravages caused by the Mongol inroads to the eastern lands of Islam and as early as Balban's reign (1266-1287) in the thirteen-century. Delhi was thronged with Muslim immigrants of distinction from many lands. The Muslim population of the subcontinent absorbed layer upon layer of Arabs, Turks, Afghans, Iranians and others."

The people mentioned above were scattered all over India. But of them, belonging to northern India or Hindustan were the leaders because of historical reasons. In the eighteenth century, the Mughal courts at Delhi and Agra had become schools for manners and good taste even for opponents and rebels. Northern India or Hindustan was the centre of Muslim and Mughal culture as the region was the seat

of main power of Muslim rule in India. The British named them as "Hidoostanees" i.e. from Hindustan. For instance a British officer writing about the mutiny of 1857 mentions to "pick out all Sikhs and other Punjabees from the Hidoostanee regiments of the line..."

R. Montgomery, the Judicial Commissioner, Punjab identifies Hindustanis as the leaders of the mutiny of 1857. He wrote:

"I would appeal to every officer who has served under it during the memorable year 1857 to give his own private experience as to the justice of the measures which have been adopted. I would not ask him to gather inferences from the narration's of any person; let him mention the name of the class whom he personally, in his own sphere of labour, mainly feared; let him say whom he found to be the instigators of plots, the fomenters of sedition and the prime movers in ill feeling. The answers in almost every separate case would be Hidoostanees." The Hidoostanees (or Hindustanis) of the British were Hindus as well as Muslims: About the responsibility of initiation and leadership of the revolt, there must have been on the British mind a big question mark.

The matter was settled as time passed, and the British fixed responsibility of the mutiny more precisely, when they concluded that "the Mohammedans were the instigators, and induced the Hindus to join them." So even in 1857, after more than a century of their decline, they were able to "induce the Hindus to join them."

In 1906 the Muslim elite of India led by the Hindustanis started Muslim League party and in 1940, demanded a separate Muslim country. The above-mentioned elites, who were Urdu- speaking migrated to Pakistan and took control of the new country. I named them 'Urdu Party'.

Mostly they were from United Provinces, Bihar and Hyderabad (Deccan) in India and they settled, mostly, in the Sindh province of Pakistan. They have continued to maintain Mohajir (refugee) label for their group identification. The lead elements of the prevalent culture in Pakistan belong to this community. In the last half a century or so what this community had initiated disfigured the land and the peoples of Pakistan. In the process locals were overwhelmed by the culture they spread. As, apparently, Pakistan has been a functioning society, outside world is not aware about the inner working in Pakistan. But then Afghanistan was a country where the Taliban had 'established' peace. But beneath that 'peace' there was something very dangerous the world had to discover in due course of time. Likewise, beneath this

functioning state of Pakistan, lie the seeds of a far bigger catastrophe than Afghanistan.

### **The Era of supremacy 1200-1700**

The opening chapter of any era of Indian history comprises invasions and consequent immigration from the northwest. History records many people or nations who lived, invaded and /or migrated to the subcontinent: people of the Indus civilization (2500 to 1500 BC), the Aryans (about 1500 BC), the Iranians (about 500 BC), the Greeks and allied (326 BC and consequently), the Sakas (2nd or 1st century BC), the Kushans (1st century AD), the Huns (5th and 6th century AD), the Muslims (from about 1000 to about 1800 AD).

Except in the last single case of Muslims, presently, there do not exist pressing problems, left by history, as a direct consequence of these invasions and immigrations. Historical processes have taken care of them, as, for instance, due to the Greek invasion of Alexander, we do not confront any problem. Those who are responsible today, in the region, have to handle the last case. Out of this problem, we must not let a new or a transformed problem to emerge. I believe, we have the resources and wisdom to do that.

Before the Mughals appeared on the Indian scene in 1526, peoples of India, had already experienced the rule of five Muslim dynasties and their 33 sultans, starting from 1206. The period is called the Sultanate period. Standing with the peoples of that time, let us have some glimpses of the rulers and their actions during this period. History speaks like this:

*A sultan records: 'I forbade the infliction of any severe punishment on the Hindus in general, but I destroyed their idol temples and instead thereof raised mosques.' or 'I encouraged my infidel subjects to embrace the religion of the prophet, and I proclaimed that everyone who repeated the creed and became a Musalman should be exempt from the jizya or poll tax.*

*The jizya in Delhi was assessed in three grades. In former reigns Brahmans had been excluded. Firuz Shah resolved to include them. The Muslims of the fourteenth century were convinced that the tolerance of idolatry was a sin.*

*The sultan ordered that wherever there was a village held by proprietary right, in free gift, or as religious endowment, it should by one stroke of the pen be brought under the exchequer,*

*Rules were likewise drawn up for grinding down the Hindus and for depriving them of that wealth and property which fosters disaffection and rebellion.*

*No Hindu could hold up his head, and in their houses no sign of silver or of gold... or of any superfluity was to be seen.*

*The many Hindu buildings overthrown supplied materials for the new mosques and colleges.*

*Their fierce fanaticism, which regarded the destruction of non-Muslims as a service eminently pleasing to God, made Muslim invaders pitiless, and consequently far more terrifying than the ordinary enemies met in India.*

*The enormous wealth in gold, silver, and jewels, not to mention more commonplace valuables, accumulated in their temples, palaces and towns of India fired their (Muslim invaders) imagination.*

*Mahmud was a zealous Muslim of the ferocious type then prevalent, who felt it to be a duty as well as a pleasure to slay idolaters. Three months of steady marching brought him into the heart of the rich Gangetic provinces; and by the time he had slain his tens of thousands and collected millions of treasure he was ready at the beginning of the hot season to go home and enjoy himself.*

From this harsh climate for the peoples of India, a change came with Akbar. His policies were not determined by his personal fancies or beliefs in matters of religion. At an early age he perceived the political necessity that the padshah should be the impartial sovereign of all his subjects, irrespective of creed. No pressure was put on the princes of Amber, Marwar and Bikaner to adopt Islam, and they were freely entrusted with the highest military commands and the most responsible administrative offices.

That was entirely new departure, due to Akbar himself. From beginning to the end of Muslim rule in India, this the only departure of Muslim rulers' policy toward Hindus or the peoples of India could not be sustained and was ultimately altered or reversed by Aurangzeb.

This policy afforded the strongest support to the throne in the reigns of Akbar and his son, and continued to bear fruit even in the reigns of his grandson, Shahjahan,

and his great-grandson, Aurangzeb. But Aurangzeb's ill-judged policy of worrying Hindus gradually estranged the Rajput chieftains and largely contributed to the rapid dissolution of the empire, which occurred after his death.

He excluded Hindus from holding office so far as possible, cast down their temples, and harassed them by insulting regulations. He enforced the levy of the *jizya*, and in his latest years refused to allow the least relaxation in the collection of the tax. Orthodox ideals never lost hold among the Muslim religious classes and in Aurangzeb, for whatever reasons, they found, a public champion. It is not to be wondered at that such conduct has won him the reverence of Muslims.

Before the reign of Aurangzeb, orthodoxy under the Mughals was a matter of private practice, not of dynastic policy. It was more difficult to preserve appearances under Akbar, Jahangir and Shahjahan.

Akbar formally abolished *jizya*, and by appointing Rajput chiefs as provincial governors and a Khatri, Raja Todar Mal, as chief revenue officer he placed non-Muslims in authority over Muslims. He allowed religious debate on an equal footing. In works on kingship written by his friend and confidant, Abu Fazal (1551-1602), no reference was made to the duty of a Muslim ruler to enforce the shari'a.

But Aurangzeb, in 1665, levied discriminatory internal customs tolls on Hindu merchants; in 1669 he issued orders for the destruction of Hindu temples and in 1679 he formally imposed *jizya* allowing members of the Muslim religious classes to enjoy some of the proceeds.

His actions fostered powerful myths after his death - in the eighteenth century that powerful elements in the Muslim ruling elites could be rallied for a policy of discrimination against non-Muslims, and in the twentieth century that Muslims had once been great because they had been godly, and might be so again - by becoming godly again.

### **Akbar vs. Aurangzeb**

What Akbar tried to do, was the most fundamental and crucial question not only for the future of India but for the Muslim elites as well. But they were not aware of that. And when they were in such state of mind of unawareness, they lost supremacy. New elements entered in Indian power politics. New questions arose and complications increased; while the elites continued to deteriorate in every way.

Akbar's effort proved to be an exception, while Aurangzeb's line remains, even today, in firm control of the mind of the Muslim elites in Pakistan.

### **The Decline and the Mutiny 1700-1857**

For the Muslim elites in northern India, British conquest meant the destruction of a way of life more than the destruction of a livelihood. What started in Bengal at the small battle of Plassey in 1757 ended with the conquest of Punjab in 1849. The British were the masters of India from the Indus to the Bay of Bengal. But earlier in 1803, together with Delhi and Agra, the Hindustan the focus of our discussion had already passed to the British.

In the eighteenth century (decline period), the strongly orthodox who had acquiesced in Akbar's stance showed signs of being supplanted by attitudes of a more puritan aggressiveness. By the time the British acquired paramountcy in India, voices had been raised demanding, in effect, the rejection of the religious modus vivendi of medieval India in favour of a classical and indeed Arabic Islam. The history of British India was to reveal that such a call could unite for common action India's Muslims, otherwise divided by class, education language and regional culture.

The anarchy and despoliation of the eighteenth century and the evident loss of Muslim dynastic power to non-Muslim Maratha and Sikh began to gain a hearing for more purist Islam. The Qur'an proclaimed that God confided the world to his righteous servants; the eighteenth-century sense suggested that Muslims were losing command of the world: therefore, the religiously inspired logic ran, they were doing so because they were no longer righteous. Much of the contemporary historical writing of the first half of the eighteenth century ascribed the troubles of the empire to the moral shortcomings of the Mughal nobility, to its members' disloyalty, dereliction of duty and greedy intrigues with Maratha chiefs. There was a school of thought, led by Chin Qilch Khan, 'first Nizam of Hyderabad (1724-48), that saw salvation for the empire in the greater discrimination against non-Muslims, including the levy of *Jizya*.

The view of Shah Wali Allah (1703-62) was that the less they shared with their non-Muslim neighbours the better servants of God Indian Muslims would be. As the religious appeal was to prove the most effective way of unifying the Muslims of British India, this was a suggestion with the profoundest political implications when, as was to happen under British rule, Muslims outside the old ruling circles came to have a hand determining their political destiny.

One would expect that what was not discovered during supremacy, adversity might make them aware of that. That was not to be.

Although the impalpable pressure of Western ideas was making itself felt upon Hindus as well as Muslim society which brought them to the uprising or mutiny of 1857, when Muslims and Hindus fought together against the British, even then the attitude towards Hindus did not change. There is an interesting incident on record to illustrate that, when the mutineers were finally defeated on September 14, 1857 in the city of Delhi. The witness records:

About midday the Mahommedans ceased to oppose the English. They, together with the Sepoys, began to take refuge in the houses of the Hindus, whom they upbraided for not co-operating with them. The whole day, they were pouring abuse upon the Hindus, threatened to massacre both them and their families, when they should have defeated the English.

### **After the mutiny**

In the words of a Mohajir Pakistani ideologue:

"The events of 1857 have a two-fold significance in the history of modern Muslim India. They dealt a final blow to the idea of the Mughal Empire and they put seal on the decline of the Muslims (read here Hindustanis) in all walks of life.

"The British believed that the Muslims were responsible for the anti-British uprising of 1857 and, therefore, they were subjected to ruthless punishment and merciless vengeance. In every department of life where government patronage was essential, the doors were closed on Muslims. The Muslims were hounded out of employment and opportunities. The landed gentry were disinherited through large-scale confiscations. Muslim education had been ruined through deliberate negligence on the part of the British. Persian had been ousted as the official language and replaced with English. The Muslim qadis (judges) had lost employment when English law replaced Muslim law. Even such subordinate government posts as were still open to the Indians and these were those that earned miserable salaries, went to the Hindus. The British had always looked upon the Muslims as their adversaries because they had resented being ousted from power. With the rebellion of 1857 this feeling was intensified and every attempt was made to ruin and suppress the Muslims forever."

The Muslims of the writer above were, in fact, Hindustani Muslims because the gaps created by the revolt of the Hindustani regiments were at once filled, largely,

by Punjabi and Pathan Muslims. So, obviously, the British took action against the mutineers, not against the Muslims as such.

### **1857: The Time to ponder**

Conflicts and wars are the high grounds in the landscape of History. So is the Mutiny of 1857 for our history. At this juncture, the reality of Muslim Hindustani elites is so obvious and visible. Apart from whatever views they had about themselves, they were certain about their enemies, and now they were two instead of one - the Hindus and the British. In adversity, their burden of life had increased.

### **From the Mutiny to Pakistan**

From 1857 to 1947 i.e. from Mutiny to Pakistan, the most significant events were the formation of Indian Nations Congress in 1885, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's work for Muslim elites, formation of Muslim League in 1906, and adoption of Pakistan Resolution in 1940 at Lahore. Remaining true to the tradition of Aurangzeb vis-à-vis Hindus, Sir Syed sought that the British should be cultivated as friends against Hindus. He asked his people to learn English and acquire Western knowledge. For that, he founded a college in 1875.

Somewhere in the middle of 1860s, he said: "Now I am convinced that the two communities will not be able to cooperate sincerely in any matter. It is only the beginning. In future I envisage mutual opposition and conflict increasing day by day on account of those who are called educated people. He who lives will see."

That his prophecy proved to be right does not prevent me from observing that he was a part of the problem. But he was not aware of that. Are not we always duty bound to solve problems instead of perpetuating them?

According to the same ideologue, quoted above, Sir Syed inculcated "self-confidence in his people. Before he appeared on the scene, the Muslim community in India was adrift; he supplied the rudder. The Muslims were under a cloud; he made efforts to remove from them the stigma of disloyalty and tried to rehabilitate them with their rulers. They were bogged down in doubt and disappointment; he gave them hope. His greatness lies in providing a firm foundation on which those who came after him could build with confidence."

What an irony that the medals and the qualifications this culture exhibits so proudly have proved to be the roadblocks for the peoples of Pakistan.

It should be pointed out that the "Muslims" above mean Hindustanis or at best the Muslim elites. During this period the Hindustanis were able to get out of their total disarray and disillusionment in the wake of the mutiny. With these prejudices, they entered Pakistan, in 1947. Many wonder why Pakistan lacks democracy while India practices it. Many have written books and put forward theories. But as you can see there is at all no trace of modern thinking or democracy in the mindset under our present scrutiny.

### **From Pakistan to the the 21st century: 1947-2002**

So during their supremacy Muslim rule could not arrive at a sustainable or futuristic stance toward Hindus or the peoples of India. Perhaps another Akbar instead of Aurangzeb would have served history better. Then they lost power; and British came. They lost the opportunity which history gave them to create something secure in India for the future; when they were incharge. The bedrock of that something had to be the nature of their relationship with the peoples of India.

But on the contrary, from their decline to the present times, their story is nothing but of one mistake after another. Always on the wrong side, never accepting reality around them, at the right moment, their journey is littered with one human tragedy after another. In the process they damaged all communities who accepted their leadership or advice and followed them. In other words we can say that they have not entered the modern age. Their frame of mind is still medieval, there is no doubt about that. But they lack the good attributes of that age, as well. Instead whatever is worst in man is the hallmark of the culture they gave to Pakistan.

They will crab, complain, protest, condemn, shout, protest but never become responsible, never come forward to accept the challenges of life as it is. They believe they are better than others, but are the victims and the world somehow prevents them from excelling; after all they are 'Muslims'! The culture incapable of normal living in the modern age where interdependence has become so paramount. The culture is a reluctant partner of the world community; as if they wanted to go somewhere else but the present circumstances have been thrust upon them. Consequently, incapable of producing anything enduring, what originate from this culture are the most lowly cunning and meanness at the highest level within the country and in their international dealings abroad.

In the preface of my book **The Pakistan Problem**, published from Lahore in 1993, I wrote:

"In any case the present format of Pakistani politics is transitory. A qualitative change has become possible. In fact, it seems imminent. We have reached a stage that the 'problems left by history' in our region can no longer remain elusive.

"Unfortunately Pakistan's polity has been infiltrated by prejudices and attitudes, which may safely be termed as *made in Hindustan*. Religion, politics and thus Pakistan became hostage to the prejudices and attitudes, which were brought in by the *Hindustanis*. An impression of separateness and exclusiveness was inculcated as if the country had no need to interact with the world. Their mental outlook was not free from the medieval trapping. The world, to them, was a hotbed of conspiracies, against Islam and Pakistan - the safe heavens where, instead of updating, they hid themselves from the world.

"One can imagine the burden they were carrying. Internally, so few to lead the backward rural Punjabis, Sindhis, and others who were Do Number 'Musalmans' because they were carrying the traces of Hinduism - the religion from which they had converted to Islam. Externally, the scene was of a positively hostile, or at least, inhospitable world. An emerging giant of Hindu India next door, while Christian West and Communist East were overwhelming the globe. The design of the world seemed to be wrong. The case was comparable to a Punjabi villager who having lost his handkerchief in the rush of a mela (village fair) thought as if the mela was arranged solely to steal his handkerchief (*mela lagayaey merà romal chori karn waste si*). A sort of state of paranoia persisted.

"Looking back today at the authors and their ideas which were marketed in Pakistan, it would be a fair statement to say that the most pragmatists and realists of them proved only to be veiled extremists having the wildest and impossible dreams. Such a lot, in charge of administration and opinion making manipulated, naturally, the peoples of Pakistan who were themselves backward due to historical reasons. It became possible to create a captive public opinion on misplaced or intentionally created and entirely wrong issues. The culture, which emerged, made every new entrant an ardent and confident fortune-seeker at the cost of the country and the people. Those who failed to qualify as such became bewildered and have not yet been able to understand as to what really has happened.

"In such a scenario the people simply could not have a place. It is pointless to indulge in accusing this or that individual. Collectively, the culture promoted what was worst in man. After about half century of Pakistan's creation, even the right

offreedom to vote - the minimal that the modern age has given to an ordinary individual - is dubious.

"Internally Pakistan is in a state which cannot be termed 'settled'; while externally thousands of kilometers of our eastern borders remain closed as if the world, on that side, ends there. We are very near to a dead end. Those who built careers and made fortunes on 'problems left by history', while creating new in the process, have lost the mandate, if at all it was ever there." 3-10-2023 ■