

AN APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM OF COMMUNAL DISHARMONY

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The bugbear of Indian social life is Hindu-Muslim disunity, which is badly exploited by interested parties for selfish political purposes. Mr. Baig, in this address which was recently delivered at the Tata School, considers our Social System, Separate Electorate and the lack of a real National Language and Script to be at the root of our communal disharmony. He calls attention, somewhat pungently though, to certain popular and provoking attitudes of "hidden Hinduism", and makes a vigorous plea for self-decommunalization. His suggestions are constructively radical and deserve the serious consideration of all Indian patriots.

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To give one's views of the reasons for communal disharmony and to suggest methods to achieve unity is a task bristling with dangers and difficulties. If one surveys the political scene with special reference to the communal question the intense depression that is created is only increased by the conviction that everybody concerned is to blame and nobody at all is innocent. Brave, therefore, is he who essays this task. Furthermore, it is a problem with so many aspects, each of which is so mutually interdependent and interacting, that it requires careful study which few, and certainly not myself, have been able to give to it. Let me, therefore, at the very commencement safeguard myself by telling you that the views and suggestions I place before you are those that I have arrived at myself from my own very limited study and experience. I should also make it clear that I am discussing communal disharmony and not political freedom and, therefore, I have not gone very deeply into the reasons for the present deadlock nor suggested any means of solving it. I am concerned only with communal harmony and disharmony.

Now, to commence with, I object to the very phrase "The Communal Problem" for I suggest that there is no communal problem in the singular or All-India sense. The so-called communal problem is the sum of a number of local communal problems each of them being entirely different and each, therefore, requiring an entirely different solution. In Bengal, for instance, the problem is largely agrarian, a problem between landlord and tenant which, by an unfortunate coincidence, falls into communal lines. It has also a rural-urban aspect. For instance, the overwhelming majority of the primary producers of jute in East Bengal are Muslims whereas the middlemen and the industrialists and all those who really reap the profits from jute are nop-

Muslims. It is, therefore, fundamentally, an economic problem which has taken a communal aspect and its solution has absolutely nothing to do with religion and little to do with politics. Its solution depends on a reorganisation of the economic structure of Bengal by such means as the abolition of the permanent settlement and also by ensuring that the primary producer while he reaps his jute reaps also the profit that is due to him. In the Punjab, on the other hand, it is a triangular problem—Hindu, Muslim and Sikh—which can only be solved by the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs of the Punjab and no one else.

In the North-West Frontier Province and in Madras there is no communal problem for when a minority is less than 5 per cent it cannot claim to be considered a minority. Bombay is in much the same position. Muslims here are 9 per cent and we can only exist, in spite of every possible safeguard, through the good-will of the majority. Assuming that the Hindu bears ill-will towards the Muslim, which is the basis of the Muslim communal case, the Hindu is in such a great majority that all the separate electorates in the world and even doubling our numbers in the Legislature through weightage, will not help us very much. Our only hope is to create amongst the Hindus the maximum amount of good-will towards the Muslims so that, as they advance educationally, economically and in other ways, they take the Muslims along with them. One of the chief causes of communal disharmony has been that the Hindu has forged ahead leaving the Muslim behind. Communalism, as it is understood, is, therefore, against Muslim interests in Bombay; hence Muslims will be the greatest beneficiaries of nationalism. Conversely, communalism is in the interest of the Hindu majority and nationalism involves a certain amount of sacrifice on their part.

I, therefore, consider it a fundamental mistake to think, so far as communal unity is concerned, on All-India terms. Fundamentally we are provincial and will be such constitutionally also since the new constitution to be forged we hope, after the war will certainly be based on residuary powers in the Provinces at the very least if not on even greater decentralisation. The Centre, therefore, is given up for all intents and purposes (however much the recent famine may have brought out India's economic unity and the need of a strong Central Government) and, in future, the centre of political gravity will be the Provinces. In fact one thing the recent famine has shown up is the weakness of the Centre which, incidentally, has its own lesson to those Muslims who are being constantly bluffed by the bogey of a Hindu-ridden Centre. The Centre will be so weak (and is so weak) that it matters little if it is all Hindu or all Muslim and if the League opinion can be appeased by a fifty-fifty Central Government, I would advise the Hindus to jump at it.

While we are talking about the Muslim League Policy let me point out

how the League's own policy proves my point, namely, that the communal problem cannot be settled on All-India lines. The League's solution is Pakistan; but what Pakistan solves I really do not know. There are 40 per cent of Hindus in the Pakistan areas and 20,000,000 Muslims in the non-Pakistan areas. Even assuming that there is an All-India communal problem, all that is achieved is that this problem is divided into two. In both these areas the problem will remain to be solved as much after Pakistan as before and if all kinds of guarantees and safeguards can be given to the minorities in the Pakistan areas, they can be equally given to the minorities in All-India. At any rate, why should the Hindu minority accept from the Muslim majority what the Muslims themselves are not prepared to accept from the All-India Hindu majority ? And as for the 20,000,000 Muslims left out of Pakistan, they are quietly jettisoned and forgotten. A most effective and satisfactory solution to a difficult problem ! What Pakistan does solve, however, is the Congress-League problem since, after Pakistan, the League will rule undisturbed over Pakistan and the Congress over the rest. But what it does not solve is the Hindu-Muslim problem which, if anything, will become more acute.

I also object very strongly indeed to the approach to the problem, which has become very prevalent lately, as a means of getting rid of the British. There is no doubt that we must get rid of the British and there is also no doubt that to do so communal unity is absolutely necessary. But communal unity is an end in itself and should be pursued irrespective of whether we get rid of the British or not. I am highly suspicious of those who are prepared to give all kinds of concessions to Muslim communalists in order to make them line up in an anti-British front because I am certain that as soon as the British problem has been solved their interest in the communal problem will also come to an end. Please, therefore, do not consider communal unity as a means to an end but as an end in itself irrespective of anything and everything else,

Further, I deprecate the tendency, which is also very prevalent, of putting the whole blame for communal disharmony on British shoulders and then after saying "What can we do while the British are here to divide and rule" doing absolutely nothing at all. I am afraid the British serve as a first class alibi for those who have done nothing for communal unity and intend to do nothing, but require something with which to appease their very guilty consciences. Do not consider for a moment that I do not consider the British guilty. If anybody has any doubts about their policy of divide and rule, let him read "The Communal Triangle" by Ashok Mehta and Achut Patwardhan. This is a first class exposure of two sides of the

triangle, the British and the Muslim. But it is completely silent about the Hindu side which is, in my opinion, the most to blame. It is the most to blame for in the final analysis a minority dances to the tune played by the majority. If the majority is national the minority will be national, and if the minority is communal it is because the majority is so. Of this state of affairs, the British have taken the fullest advantage, and why should they not ? The fault is ours and the responsibility of solving it is also ours; on our priority list of National Needs, Communal Unity and not Quit India should be the first. In fact, I may say that the Mahatma's change of attitude from maintaining that communal unity must come first to that of the British must quit first, robbed the dynamic appeal of "Quit India" of Muslim support from the very start.

Another unfortunate habit of ours is that of treating the symptoms rather than the disease; it is this more than anything else that explains our complete failure to solve this problem. The reasons for our differences have never been properly analysed and attacked at the very root. An outstanding example of this attitude is the recent agitation against the Pentangular Cricket Tournament. Every sensible person must condemn communal cricket but will stopping the Pentangular bring it to an end ? Communal cricket will exist as long as there are communal gymkhanas, and as long as they exist it is natural that one gymkhana will play the other at various games. If the Hindu and Muslim gymkhanas play quietly on each other's grounds, as they may do every week-end, nobody complains. But let them play at the Brabourne Stadium and protests are loudly made. Many, many of those who object to the Pentangular are themselves members of communal clubs, and few Hindus realise the tremendous set-back that has been given to national unity by the Congress Government and many prominent Congressmen being associated with the Hindu Swimming Bath at Chowpatty. Only the other day when arguing against Pakistan with some Muslim students, I was bluntly told "Why do you talk to us ? Pakistan is a big matter. Let the Hindus first give a lead in small matters. Let them, for instance, close their "Pakistan" swimming bath and then we will discuss Pakistan." Therefore if you wish communal sport to end, do not attack matches by gymkhanas but attack the gymkhanas themselves. There are many prominent Congressmen and alleged nationalists who are members of communal bodies of which we are aware. I have not, I am sorry to say, found public opinion focussed in their direction.

The whole approach to Hindu-Muslim Unity is thus based on treating the symptoms rather than the disease. Take the cry of Congress-League Unity. Assuming that the League represents the Muslims, which it does not,

and assuming the implication inherent in this cry, that the Congress represents the Hindus, which it does not either, a Hindu-Muslim Pact may be arrived at and everybody will be happy. But a Hindu-Muslim Pact is not Hindu-Muslim Unity for under a Pact Hindus will remain Hindus and Muslims will remain Muslims—both carefully watching each other for any infringement of the Pact. The word we should use is National Unity which would make us cease thinking as Hindus and Muslims but as Indians, whatever our religion may be.

This attitude cannot be brought about by half-a-dozen leaders, however eminent and representative, sitting round a table and signing a joint document of which the very basis will inevitably be the preservation of the interests and existence of the signatories, their communities and their parties. It can only be brought about by a positive attempt of decommunalisation by every one of us in this room and outside. Few of us are doing this and most of us are trying for Congress-League Unity. But as long as we continue to do so, real communal unity will not be achieved.

Vigorous self-decommunalisation is, therefore, the first step towards National Union but it is unfortunate that so little is actually being done in this direction. I am afraid I have to say that there is a distinct difference between Hindu Nationalism and Muslim Nationalism. I have found Muslim Nationalism to be first pro-Hindu-Muslim Unity and then, if anything, anti-British. Hindu Nationalists are first anti-British, and Hindu-Muslim Unity is generally grouped in their minds with anti-untouchability, prohibition and other desirable reforms. Many, many Hindus, quite sincerely believe that they can remain Hindu in thought, culture, appearance and habits and yet be nationalists. There is a widely prevalent belief that Hindus are Indians and Muslims Muslims. Of course, neither the Hindus nor Muslims as such are Indians, and nothing should be Indian that is not partly Hindu and partly Muslim.

Let me give you some examples. If you refer to Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee, you will call him a Bengalee. But if you refer to Mr. Fazul Haq, you automatically call him a Bengalee Muslim. Why? They are both Bengalees, and this is even more strange since the Muslims are in a majority in Bengal and, if anything, they should be Bengalees, and the Hindu, the extra. Let me give you another case. Recently, a new Dewan was appointed in Cutch. A few months ago when he was in Bombay a very prominent Cutchee, very popular in Nationalist circles, called on him. The Dewan in the course of conversation stated that during his next visit to Bombay, he would like to meet some Cutchees of Bombay. A few weeks ago he came and a party was held in his honour. The Dewan found that only Hindus had been invited, and

asked why that was so! His host was astonished. "But you said you wanted to meet Cutchees, you did not say Muslim." But are not the Muslims of Cutch Cutchees? Mr. Meherally is a Cutchee and so is Mr. Jinnah. How can you blame anyone thinking himself a Muslim first as long as this attitude persists. It occurs even in business relations. The Devkaran Nanji Bank is considered an "Indian" Bank. But the Habib Bank is a "Muslim" Bank. Even the Tatas, in the minds of most people, are still a "Parsee" firm. But the Birlas or Dalmias, who very probably do not employ a single non-Hindu, are "National" enterprises. Do not think that I have given isolated cases. This attitude that the Hindu is an Indian and the Muslim is a Muslim is more the [rule than the exception and its existence is one of the prime causes of communal disharmony.

If, therefore, we want national unity we must have a clear understanding of nationalism. I have said earlier that the chief characteristic of Hindu Nationalism is anti-Britishism. I am afraid that in the majority of cases it is the only characteristic. Anti-Britishism is undoubtedly an inevitable and even a healthy manifestation of nationalism but it is not nationalism. Nationalism should be Indianism as opposed to Hinduism or Muslimism and that is the one thing it really is not. That is why nationalism is so suspect amongst Muslims. Muslims would have no objection to Indianism but they strongly object to hidden-Hinduism.

Let me give you a case. For years there has been in Bombay the Grain Dealers' Association of over 2,000 members of which I do not think a single one was a Muslim. Yet this Association was a strongly nationalist organisation. It was affiliated to the Indian Merchants' Chamber and it was one of the props of the Congress. Its Committee were all Congressmen and from every point of view it was a strong nationalist body. But was it? All that it was was a Hindu anti-British body and nothing else. Came rationing, and Government decided to deal with the grain dealers through the Association. This meant that the Muslim grain dealers would have been left entirely out of the rationing scheme. Some of them came to me, and I convened a meeting of them and formed (and you cannot blame us) a Muslim Grain Dealers' Association. I then took them to Mr. Gorwalla and got the Association recognised, and later we were given our full quota of ration shops. There are nearly 400 Muslim grain dealers in Bombay, the very existence of which the nationalist association was blissfully unaware. Once the Muslims were organised and had their quota of ration shops, I spoke to Mr. Rattansey Devji and suggested that we bring the leaders of the two Associations together. This we did and amidst great cordiality and Hindu-Muslim brotherhood, we have formed a Grain Dealers' Federation which, I am glad to say, is working

as one body without the slightest trace of Hindu-Muslim feeling. Now it has become a national body but it is not one Association but a Federation, the larger half of which is Hindu in composition and the smaller half Muslim in name and composition. We hope eventually to make it into one Association but the point is that all these years the Hindus, while they considered themselves perfectly national, made not the slightest attempt to associate anybody except Hindus with them. You will say that nothing prevented the Muslims from joining. True, nothing prevents them joining the Congress but while certain attitudes exist, they just don't.

Let me give another case. The other day I read that Mr. K. M. Munshi had been elected President of a Committee to write a History of India. On this Committee there was not a single Muslim name. I wonder what kind of Indian History they are going to write, yet I am sure that they are perfectly satisfied with their own composition. Take the case of the Maharashtra University Committee. Here is another glaring example of considering Hindus as Maharashtrians and Muslims merely as Muslim. In spite of there being thousands and thousands of Muslims in Maharashtra, even with Marathi as their mother tongue, not a single Muslim was appointed on the Committee till loud protests were made when one was hurriedly nominated some weeks after the Committee was announced. Please forgive me giving so many examples but theories are based on data and the data to prove my point is overwhelming. It is this attitude which I refer to as hidden-Hinduism and it is this attitude that keeps communal disharmony alive. Be careful, therefore, of your use of the word "national". No hundred percent Hindu or Muslim, however patriotic or anti-British he may be, is a nationalist. A nationalist is one who thinks of India as a nation and who is an Indian first and last. How many of our national Leaders stand this test ?

I have spoken of the need to decommunalise ourselves. Here again let us attack the disease and not the symptom. What is it that makes us communal ? I do not believe that it is our different religions. It is our social system that is to blame. We are not even Hindus and Muslims, for our social system has divided us into a thousand distinct ethnological groups quite apart from our large provincial divisions. Khojas marry Khojas and are Khojas first and last. Bhatias marry Bhatias and are Bhatias first and last. This creates a strong exclusive mentality so well brought out by the tremendous nepotism that is such a glaring feature of our life. Fundamentally, few people are "anti" anybody else but the social system, and the joint family system in particular, makes them so "pro" themselves that they have no time for anybody else. We are nepotistic rather than communal and a very large part of what is considered as communalism is nepotism pure and simple. The

solution, therefore, is not social reform, which again treats the symptom, but to attack the disease which is our many, many distinct ethnological groups. These must be shattered before any real national union can take place, and the only remedy I can see is inter-marriage. In no other country in the world could one seriously put this forward as a national need since marriage is essentially a personal affair and you cannot dictate or command that one person should fall in love with a member of another community. In India, fortunately, marriages based on love are still rare and arranged marriages the general rule. If, therefore, once inter-marriage is generally advocated, thousands of such marriages could be arranged with little difficulty. By inter-marriage I do not mean only Hindu-Muslim marriages; I fully realise these would be more difficult, but Hindu-Hindu and Muslim-Muslim inter-marriage is vitally necessary. Bhatia and Lohana, Jat and Rajput, Gujarati and Maharatta, Brahmin and non-Brahmin, Khoja and non-Khoja, Shia and Sunni and so on. Just see what happens in other countries of the world. Let us take England. A young Scot leaves Scotland and settles in London. In all probability he will meet some nice English girl down there and marry her; so will his son and soon that family is neither English nor Scottish but British of Scot extraction.

In India, on the other hand, there are Gujarati merchants settled for generations in Madras and Sindhi merchants settled in Bombay. Yet, every generation will go back for his wife not only to his Province but, perhaps, to the very village he came from originally. It is this sort of thing that keeps us in such distinct ethnological groups. It is absolutely ridiculous that in 1944 two young Hindus or Muslims living, perhaps, next door to each other, should not be allowed to marry but must go miles and miles away to find their respective wives or husbands. What we need are Indian families of Gujarati or Maharatta or Punjabi extraction. India, today, is a basket of eggs, and as long as we remain in different shells it matters little how much these shells are in contact with each other in the same basket. What we have to do is to break the shells that keep us as many different eggs. And this is only possible through inter-marriage and I place this before you not as an ideal but as a serious and perfectly practicable proposition.

As we are divided and sub-divided by our social system so are we divided by the many languages we speak; another vital need therefore is an All-India language. A very interesting symposium called the "National Language of India" edited by Dr. Z. A. Ahmad has been published by Kitabistan and I would advise you all to read it. The general consensus of opinion is that the language, loosely known as Hindustani, has a 75% common vocabulary whether spoken by Muslims or Hindus. Muslims use more Persian and Hindus use

more words of Sanskrit origin but 75% of the vocabulary is common. It is also admitted that while this language is known as Hindustani, few use this term. The Muslims call it Urdu and the Hindus call it Hindi.

I believe that the use of names such as Hindi and Hindustani is a great psychological mistake. Urdu is a national language evolved through years of Hindu and Muslim cultural contact and, as stated by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, is essentially an Indian language and has no place outside. If, therefore, it is considered that there are too many Persian words, the solution is to lessen them and to introduce more Sanskrit words. To state it differently the opposite of Persianized Urdu should not be Sanskritized Hindi but Sanskritized Urdu. Even in writing, Urdu could be written in either Persian or Nagari Script. But the word Urdu should be retained and the murder of this word, for it is virtually murdered, constitutes a great psychological set-back to national unity. Even Mahatma Gandhi neatly dropped Urdu in inventing the phrase Hindi-Hindustani. I believe very strongly that the word Urdu should be used to describe the national language but if people cannot bring themselves to use this word, then let us drop both Urdu and Hindi and use Hindustani. Unfortunately the word Hindi is being brought more and more into use and this word is, frankly, a constant irritant to Muslim opinion.

I have, of course, been dealing so far with our fairly common spoken language. When we come to the written language we are, of course, immediately faced by the script problem. The consensus of opinion in the symposium was that both scripts should be taught and either used in accordance to the preference of the writer. This is a decision based on evasion and is therefore very unsatisfactory. Just imagine the strain to which the child is exposed. He will have to learn his provincial script, then Persian and Devanagari and, when he goes in for higher education, the Roman script. I believe the solution lies in adopting an adapted Roman script both for our national as well as our provincial languages. We will never have a real national language as long as it is in two scripts; for, Muslims will only use one and the Hindus the other, and in a national language we must understand not only what the other speaks but also what he writes. Roman script, scientifically adapted to Indian conditions, will enable a basic natural language to crystallise; it will facilitate inter-provincial cultural contacts since, if we can at least read the other provincial languages, we can more easily pick up a working knowledge; and finally Roman script will make easy the learning of English without which no higher education is possible, and which will be absolutely necessary in the very small world that will emerge after this war. Another great advantage of this script will be that it will pave the way for

mass literacy. In order to print Hindustani or Urdu it requires 650 matrices in the Persian or Arabic script. Nagari necessitates 350 matrices but the Roman script will require only 60. Our many languages are, therefore, a very definite cause of our disharmony and I put forward for a solution Urdu as the national language written in an adapted Roman script which should also be the script for our provincial languages. For the sake of compromise, however, I would be prepared to drop the word "Urdu" and accept "Hindustani" but, under no circumstances, "Hindi".

I have so far dealt with the social system and with language and I now come to politics. While it is not religion but our social system that is to blame for our communal differences, it is neither religion, nor our social system nor communal differences that is to blame for our political differences. Let us consider for a minute the functions of a Government. Its functions are best brought out by its departments. The departments of the Bombay Government are as follows:—Political and Services, Finance, Finance (Supply), Revenue, Home, Legal, General and Public Works. Now neither the most orthodox Brahmin nor the most fanatical Muslim can evolve a communal policy with regard to say the P. W. D. or Revenue or Law and Order or Finance. It is true that the communal question would arise in Education and the Services but both these points could easily be met.

We have political differences because we have political parties on a communal basis and this is due to one reason and one reason alone, and that is separate electorates. A separate political party is a natural corollary to separate electorates and when that separate party is in opposition its duty is to oppose. But its opposition is not due to communal differences but to party differences which is very different indeed. This is the disease in our body politic, and all the safeguards, guarantees, pacts and resolutions are merely treatments of the symptoms. National Unity is impossible as long as separate electorates exist and every possible attempt must be made, and no cost is too high, to get the Muslims into joint electorates. As things are, nothing is being done to give the Muslims any faith at all in joint electorates or to feel that under them any Muslims that remotely represent them will ever be returned.

Some of you will immediately point to Mr. Masani and to Mr. Meherally. With all respects, Mr. Masani's election as Mayor is not due to joint electorates but due to reservation of seats. While he is in every way fully fitted to be the first citizen of Bombay, he is so to-day because he is a Parsee, whose turn it was, and the only Parsee available in the Congress Municipal Party. Mr. Meherally is a typical example of my point that there is a difference between Muslim nationalism and Hindu nationalism, Mr. Meherally

is an Indian first and last but, apart from the relations and personal friends, has no roots in and little contact with the Muslim masses. In his last election he got, I believe, 80 Muslim votes. Many of his colleagues, on the other hand, have only roots in the Hindu masses and have no thoughts or contacts outside. He is, I am proud to say, an Indian. They are Hindus who have signed the Congress Pledge and that is the utmost that can be said of them.

Do not, however, imagine that I brand all Hindus thus. Many, many Hindus, especially the younger ones who think entirely on economic lines, and such as those who belong to Mr. Masani's group, are Indians first and last and have no trace of Hinduism in them. Neither are all nationalist Muslims like Mr. Meherally. There is today, in Bombay, a Muslim journalist who holds a Congress seat in the Assembly who is daily advocating in his paper a Government of Allah under which all Hindus will either have to be converted or else penalised. How such a person is allowed to remain in the Congress I really do not know. But, I repeat, after giving this matter every consideration, that the average nationalist Muslim is as much nationalist as anti-British and least of all communal whereas the average Nationalist Hindu is primarily anti-British, secondly communal and lastly national. This has given nationalism a Hindu atmosphere and contributes greatly to communal disharmony.

Every attempt must, therefore, be made to introduce joint electorates and, however difficult it may be and however long it may take, you may rest assured that in spite of a thousand Congress-League Pacts until there are joint electorates there will not be national union. This necessitates great broad-mindedness and statesmanship from members of the major community, qualities completely absent in past negotiations. The plan that holds the field is joint electorates with reservation of seats of which a variation was the Scheme known as the Mohamed Ali Formula under which there would be joint electorates with reservation of seats but with the proviso that no candidate would be declared elected unless he had secured 40% of the votes cast by his own community, and secondly, at least 5% of the votes cast by other communities wherever he was in a minority of 10 or less per cent, and 10% votes where he was in a larger minority or in a majority. This scheme, very fair on the surface since the Muslims are guaranteed as many seats as their numbers justify, is however regarded by the Muslims with intense suspicion and I am very doubtful whether they will under the present circumstances agree. "The whole object of election", say the Muslims, "is to send to the Legislature a representative. Muslims may be returned but whom will they represent? In the average electorate Hindus predominate and the Muslim returned will be their representative and not ours." Such an argument has

some substance in a province such as Bombay but what about the Muslim majority provinces such as the Punjab and the North West Frontier ? I can see no possible objection on the part of the Muslims to the introduction of joint electorates in the Muslim majority provinces and if the problem is, as I have suggested, tackled on a purely provincial basis and if the Congress and League High Commands keep their heavy hands off, it is quite possible that the local leaders would come to a perfectly satisfactory arrangement which, after all, is theirs and nobody else's business.

Now what about the Muslim minority provinces? The Muslim fear here undoubtedly holds good. I have already referred to Mr. Meherally's election. The Muslims should be proud of him and nothing that he will do will be against Muslims and everything that he will do will be for the benefit of the Muslims as much as anybody else. But with the wide gulf that separates the Hindu and Muslim masses, which not even hunger has been able to bridge, you cannot blame the Muslims for not considering anyone, however competent, who has been elected on practically entirely a Hindu vote as a Muslim representative. The plain fact is that as long as we are Hindus and Muslims, the minority is entitled to representatives who will advocate the minority's point of view. Under joint electorates they fear that the elected representatives will advocate only the majority point of view; their fears must be met since joint electorates can be introduced only with their agreement and not by force. To meet this fear I have a suggestion to make which is very simple and that is to give the Muslims two votes. This may sound startling and even unfair at first sight, but my suggestion is that in the general constituencies everybody should vote and that in addition there should be special Muslim constituencies in accordance with their numbers. That is, the Muslim constituencies will be supplementary and not complementary. By this scheme Muslims are guaranteed their proportional number of representatives of their own choosing and have, in addition a chance of increasing their number through the general electorate. But against this privilege they must be prepared to give up weightage.

There is nothing new in this suggestion except that it will be applied to Muslims and not to special interests. Every member of the University Senate and of the Merchants' Chamber, to give two examples, already have two votes; so I cannot see any great objection to giving Muslims two votes. On the other hand, there will be the great advantage in getting them into joint electorates. This will be a good test for the Hindus also; if they play the game fairly and a sufficient number of Muslims are returned, then the fear of joint electorates will prove to be false, and we will be in a position to take the next step. Some communal Hindus may say that by this means the Muslims may get more seats than their numbers warrant. The answer to

this is that provided the extra Muslims are returned from a joint electorate what does it matter ? They are, technically, representatives of both Hindus and Muslims and, if anything more of the Hindus.

I fully realise that my suggestion is in no sense a solution and might well be said to have the vices of both systems and the virtues of neither. This, actually, is the only reason why it might be considered at all as I will attempt to explain. At present there seems to be no reason whatsoever why Muslims should give up separate electorates. There are, on the other hand, many reasons why they should retain them. First, there is the open encouragement to the League's attitude given by the British Government and the repeated assurances given to them couched in such language as *to* encourage them to "stick to their guns" provided, of course, that those "guns" are pointed at the Congress. Listen, for instance, to the stirring words of Mr. Churchill. After a long diatribe against the Congress in Parliament on September 10, last year, he said :—

"Outside that party, and fundamentally opposed to it, are 90 million Muslims in British India who have their rights of self-expression. . . . It is fortunate, indeed, that the Congress Party has no influence whatever with the martial races on whom the defence of India, apart from the British forces, largely depends. Many of these races are divided by unbridgeable religious gulfs from the Hindu Congress and would never consent to be ruled by them, nor shall they ever be against their will so subjugated."

I have described Mr. Churchill's words as stirring and I think it is a correct description. If such words do not "stir" disharmony none will. If they are not an open invitation to intransigence and separatism, I do not understand English. Secondly, there is the tragic history of past communal negotiations and the criminal stupidity of Hindu Leaders. The tragedy is heightened by the fact that in many of these negotiations Mr. Jinnah was the chief advocate of joint electorates and his experiences are fresh in his mind. I would advise political students to study the proceedings of the All Parties National Convention at Calcutta over 15 years ago at which the Muslims were prepared to accept joint electorates, which broke down on the issue whether the Muslims should have $33\frac{1}{3}\%$ or 30% of seats in the Central Legislature, and the negotiations in London which preceded the Communal Award. A study of such negotiations will give political students a greater sympathy for the Muslim case. It must be recognised that though Mr. Jinnah has, today, lost all sense of proportion, he is largely what some criminally stupid Hindu leaders have made him.

Lastly, it must be remembered that separate electorates have built up

their own vested interests. The members of the Muslim political caucus that controls Muslim polities are entirely dependent on separate electorates for their return to the Central and Provincial Legislatures and fully realise that under any system of joint electorates, an entirely different type of Muslim will be returned. Therefore, they will be very careful not to adopt any measure in which there is the slightest risk of self-liquidation.

Under my scheme their position is secure but side by side with the "vice" of separate electorate is the "virtue" of joint electorate. Therefore, while it is no solution, I claim that it is an advance on the present position. Apart from constituting electorates in which Hindus will have to canvass Muslim votes—an excellent brake on their communalism—it will greatly stimulate nationalism amongst the Muslims. In the final analysis Muslim nationalism is the solution to Muslim communalism but today few politically minded Muslims can be national or socialist minded and yet hope to be returned from a communal electorate. Whether even this scheme will be accepted I cannot say but the fact that Muslims are guaranteed representatives of their own choosing in accordance with their numbers and, in addition, not only the opportunity of increasing their numbers but also of being able, to use their votes to return those Hindus whom they find more sympathetic, are advantages which merit serious consideration.

I have now given you what I consider the three main reasons for communal disharmony or, as I would prefer to term it, lack of national union. These are our Social System which is National Enemy No. 1; Separate Electorates and the lack of a real National Language and Script. These are questions which lie at the very roots of our way of life and to dig them out we will have to dig deep. What about the questions that lie on the surface? Never dismiss a point as being just superficial. It is the superficial that the eye sees first and the brain grasps the most easily. Therefore, it is with no hesitation nor apology that I now deal with the superficial. I have already referred to the Hindu Swimming Bath. I would like to refer to it in greater detail. As far as Bombay is concerned, the Congress Government while in power passed no Act which was remotely anti-Muslim. They, however, made many mistakes in detail and there was, undoubtedly, a certain amount of nepotism. Their greatest mistake was not forming a Coalition Government—even this profound mistake pales into insignificance, as far as the public is concerned—but giving land for this Bath and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel performing the opening ceremony. It is all very well asking the Muslims to cease being communal but what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. Even to-day a very prominent Congressman, who is I believe still in jail, is the Honorary Treasurer. His resigning from the Swimming Bath

Committee will do more for his country than spending the rest of his life in jail.

Another superficial question about which I hold strong views is the question of dress. I can see no reason why people, who need not do it, cling to denominational dress. Let me tell you that I feel much more comfortable talking to a Hindu in trousers than in a *dhoti* or to a bareheaded Muslim to one wearing a fez. Just think what happens in our mind as we go down any main street. We see two Parsee ladies standing before a shop window; a Borah is standing at the door of his shop; three Hindu clerks are walking along, and so on. As long as this mental census goes on, we cannot help but think on communal lines and communal thinking is the father of communal disharmony. Have you ever seen a photo of the "Congress" Cabinet? Because they are dressed differently, the two figures that stand out are Dr. Gilder and Mr. Nurie. All this is very unhealthy. Long before we can have a common identity or ideology, we must, at least, have some degree of common appearance and if you ask me to make a list of single factors that will contribute to national union, very high in the list will be a pair of trousers. Of course, I fully realise that in a country in which every anna counts, trousers are ruled out by considerations of cost alone. But what about those of us who can afford to drop denominational dress? I believe that they should do so. I am convinced that it will make a great psychological difference.

Another plea I should like to make is for more understanding of other peoples' objections and a positive attempt to meet those objections. Let me give you a case which is, perhaps, unimportant. Take the singing of *Bande Mataram*. Though this song originally appeared in an anti-Muslim book and in fact was the anthem of those who went to drive out Muslims from Bengal, I fully realise that not one per cent of those who sing it even know this fact and all sincerely regard it as a true National Anthem. I also realise that not one per cent of Muslims were aware of the origin of the song or objected to it. But this is no longer so. Thanks to Muslim League propaganda, every Muslim considers *Bande Mataram* anti-Muslim. Then why should we not drop it? We are prepared to die for our country; we are prepared to go to jail for years and years for our country; but we are not prepared to stop singing *Bande Mataram*. Where is our sense of proportion? Just imagine what the psychological effect would be if the Congress stated that in view of Muslim objection they would gladly drop *Bande Mataram* and adopt say *Hindusthan Hamara* which has the supreme advantage of having been written by a Muslim.

Now I have asked you to be clear in your mind about the word "national". I also ask you to be clear in your mind about the word

"majority". Let me tell you at once that I do not agree with those who say that democracy is unsuited to India. The greatest good of the greatest number can be the only basis for any action, and likewise the rule of the majority the only rule. But what is meant by "majority"? Obviously, a major cross-section of the people and that is the whole point. The majority should be horizontal and not vertical, and the whole trouble in India is that the majority is vertical. In India, therefore, the greatest good of the greatest number should mean the greatest good of the greatest cross-section. It is because of the vertical aspect that majority rule has become Hindu rule and there is so much of what I have described as hidden-Hinduism in democracy. The Mahasabha, for instance, is technically correct, indeed, in saying that since the Hindus are in a majority, what is for the good of the Hindus is good for India and is perfectly democratic according to accepted standards. The fear of the vertical majority is another of the chief causes of communal disharmony. When you talk of democracy, therefore, remember that it means the greatest good of the greatest cross-section and not the greatest good of the greatest community.

This, of course, is for the Hindus to remember but what about the Muslims? Muslims should remember that the vertical majority is the direct corollary of separate electorates and the fact that it operates against the Muslims is an argument in favour of joint electorates. There is little use in saying that democracy is unsuited to India, meaning thereby that it is unsuited to the Muslims of India. It is for the Muslims to make democracy suitable by converting the dreaded majority from vertical to horizontal through joint electorates. The cross-section can only be reached through electorates. One method of forming the cross-section that has been suggested and is, in some quarters, actually being canvassed, is the Statutory Coalition. As long as we have our vertical divisions, I quite agree that a coalition government is the obvious remedy, but I am against making the coalition statutory. We should refuse to assume that vertical divisions will continue for all time and the coalition should be considered as making the best of a bad job. It is, therefore, essentially a make-shift and a temporary expedient. To make it statutory would stabilise and perpetuate, even statutorily, a situation we wish gradually to bring to an end.

There is a greater objection still. While, at first sight, a statutory coalition would appear to lessen communalism through the formation of a joint government, it might actually increase it. If a coalition government is statutory, it means that no government can be formed till the minority agrees to join it. This places too great a weapon in the hands of the minority. By holding up the formation of the government till their demands are met, a

minority can make the most exaggerated demands, and, even after the formation of the government, can constantly hold over the heads of the majority the threat of resignation till their demands are granted. To reduce it to the absurd, the 5% Muslims of Madras and the 5% Hindus of the North West Frontier Province could dictate any terms they like to the 95% majority. I do not say that this is likely to happen but it is by no means beyond the bounds of possibility. Therefore, while agreeing that as long as separate electorates exist, there should be coalition governments, I believe that the coalition should be by convention and not by statute.

My last point which some will, perhaps, consider to be the most important, is the economic aspect. Economically, the first thought of both the Hindus and Muslims is bread, and the only difference seems to be that the Hindus blame the British and the Muslims blame the Hindus for the lack of it. A good government, which will raise the economic position and the standard of living of the masses is, of course, the solution and this can only be on a national basis. For instance, only debt redemption and cheap credit will considerably improve the position; for, the Hindu Bania and the Muslim Pathan have contributed as much as anybody to communal disharmony. But, as I have already said, all this can only be on a National or All-India or All-Provincial basis. It has no communal aspect, though it can bring about great communal reactions for the good.

But communal disharmony is, unfortunately, common among the middle-class, and though the middle-class is microscopic, due to our social and ethnological differences, the masses more naturally follow their own middle-class. Politically they have no other alternative owing to the existence of separate electorates. The Muslim middle-class is, economically behind the Hindu middle-class, and this is a problem to which I have devoted some special study. My conclusion is it is largely the Muslims' own fault that they are behind, and the remedy is for the Muslims themselves to be more commercial minded. Business firms may belong to members of certain communities but business is becoming more and more joint-stock; and assuming that Messrs. Walchand & Co. is entirely Hindu and that even the Managing Agency Firm of Tata Sons is predominantly Parsee, any Muslim can share in their activities and prosperity by buying shares of their companies. But a communal case exists in the sphere of employment. While I have come across no Muslim who does not employ Hindus, there are hundreds and hundreds of Hindu firms which do not employ a single Muslim. This is wrong and it is a reason why these firms are, in Muslim eyes, Hindu firms instead of business firms of whom the proprietors or managers are Hindus. I realise the difficulty of finding suitable Muslims for mercantile posts. But it is a question

of supply and demand. There is practically no demand and hence the supply is small. Let there be a positive demand and, if not immediately, very soon there will be adequate supply. Greater employment of Muslims by Hindus will contribute much to communal harmony amongst the middle-class, which in turn, will for certain influence the masses very quickly.

Now to conclude. I have placed before you what are my personal views on this very difficult and highly controversial question and, perhaps, I have emphasised what others would not and have left out what others would emphasise. This is inevitable in any personal approach. Let me now place before you the conclusions I have arrived at:—

I believe that, as a first step, we should develop and encourage healthy provincialism. If it is said that there is no such thing as an Indian, there is certainly no such thing as a Hindu or Muslim either. The whole concept of a Hindu nation and a Muslim nation is false. But there are, undoubtedly, such people as Bengalees, Gujaratis, Maharashtrians, etc., which include people of all faiths. We should, I suggest, develop this tendency. Some may say that by encouraging provincialism, instead of a Hindu-Muslim problem we shall have a dozen inter-provincial problems. I do not think so. If we can make Mr. Fazlul Haq and Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee into good Bengalees first and Mr. K. M. Munshi and Sir Sultan Chinoy into good Gujaratis first, to make them into good Indians it will be comparatively simple. It is the first river that is difficult to cross. Moreover, geographical and cultural patriotism is never so strong as ethnological patriotism and the former can be extended; the latter cannot.

Consider how little we in Bombay have exploited the Gujarati language. It is the mother tongue of the Jains, Bhatias, Lohanas and all the Hindus of Gujarati; it is the mother tongue of the Khojas, Bohras, Memons and several other Muslim communities of Gujerat, and it is the mother tongue of the Parsees. Have we ever tried to bring together the Gujarati-speaking people? We have in Bombay a great Gujarati revivalist, author and politician who heads all kinds of Gujarati movements. I have not seen non-Hindu names associated with him. He typifies the Hindu nationalist to whom I have referred earlier. In his mind only Hindus are Gujaratis and as for the Muslims and Parsees, they may be in Gujerat but they are not of it. His communalism is greater than his knowledge; for, 99% of the Muslims of Gujerat are converts, so even ethnologically they are as much Gujarati as any Jain from Ahmedabad. We have here a great bond which we should weld. I do not think that pure religion is to blame for our' disharmony but I repeat that our Social System is our *National* Enemy Number One. To break this system will require great sacrifices and will involve social boy-

cott, ostracism and excommunication. Yet it must be done and Young India must do it.

I believe that Separate Electorates are our *Political Enemy Number One* and that the solution to this lies in the Hindus winning the confidence of the Muslims not by words but by deeds. It is ironical that the Muslims should feel compelled to cling to separate electorates when, in actual fact, such electorates are against their interests. Separate electorates perpetuate a communal majority and are, therefore, to the advantage of the majority. Only through joint electorates will the Muslims be able to break the vicious circle of Hindu rule. While, therefore, the majority must be statesmanlike and generous, the Muslims must also be prepared to take a risk which, in the long run, is in their favour. In the Muslim majority provinces there is not even a risk. Joint electorates are in their favour from every point of view.

I believe that the adoption of a common script is essential and that this should be the Roman script scientifically adapted. I know all the arguments against it and we may certainly lose something by its adoption. But I am convinced that we will gain much more, much of which may not be apparent at present.

I believe that freedom from want is one of the chief antidotes to communal disharmony but not the chief one. We hear a lot from Bengal about the famished thinking only of food and not of religion or community. I do not doubt it. Self-preservation is the strongest instinct. But I believe that this is so only while there is no food. As soon as food is forthcoming, the vicious circles of our social and political systems will immediately again begin to rotate and make themselves felt.

I believe that the chief solution is self-decommunalisation. Political freedom may be secured by an ingenious constitution swollen with safe-guards, guarantees to minorities, charters of right and so on ; but that will not bring about National Union. A Hindu-Muslim Pact will undoubtedly produce the right atmosphere in which unifying forces can work but we will not become national from the top but from the bottom by each one of us divesting ourselves of our communal attitudes. British propoganda is notoriously bad but during their anxious time, they produced a slogan which was an inspiration. This was the single sentence : "It all depends on me". I commend this slogan to you. National Union will only come when all of us say to ourselves and mean it: "National Union depends on me". My last words, therefore, are : Let us decommunalise ourselves. Let us think big; Let us think culturally; Let us think Provincial; Let us think INDIAN.