

ISLAMISM AND ISLAMIZATION: MUSLIM ENCOUNTER WITH HINDUS IN THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT

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The Muslim psyche experienced unprecedented stir beginning from the 19th century when European colonization began to facilitate the birth of new ideas of secularism, democracy and nationalism. Traditional Muslim intellectuals have understood secularism to involve separation of the state from the divine realm. Democracy to them, has involved rule of the majority based on human constitutions in place of the revelation of God contained in scriptures and nationalism has been viewed as worship of the territory in place of one sovereign God. The ideas of secularism and democracy not only made space of plurality of laws and nations but also created space for religious entities. Muslim intellectuals like Hasan al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb, Iqbal, Mawdudi and others responded to the problem and challenge of plurality, western secularism and democracy bred, by formulating their integrative political ideology based on the idea of One sovereign God-one law¹. Such a response has also been called 'Islamism'².

In the Indian subcontinent, perhaps for administrative reasons, the British ignoring the diversity, clubbed various caste sub-groups together into what is known as Hinduism. Various Indian low caste sub-groups and Buddhists had converted nominally to Islam when it came from

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¹For instance, Namik Kamel (d. 1888), Jamal al-Din al-Afgani (d. 1897), Muhammad Abduh (d. 1905), Rashid Rida (d. 1935), Muhammad Iqbal (d. 1938), the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood founded in 1928 by Hasan al-Banna (d. 1949) and Jama at-e-Islami founded by Mawlana Mawdudi (d. 1979).

²See in particular M. Hoebink, "Thinking about Renewal in Islam: Towards a History of Islamic Ideals on Modernization and Secularization" in *Arabica: Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies*, XLVI, Fascicule I, January 1999, Pp. 29-62. See also Scholars have used the term in this sense. Haldun Gulalp, *Political Islam in Turkey: The Rise and Fall of the Refah Party*, in *The Muslim World*, Vol. LXXXIX. No.1, January 1999, pp.22-41.

outside India as a reaction against the Brahmanical oppression. Subscribing to a more pluralistic policy towards Hindu majority and other minorities, the Muslim elite had largely ignored the converts when they were in power. When the British came to power they clubbed the Indian Muslim sub-groups with the Muslim elite who had ruled the country before the British³. The Muslim elite now out of political power, realising the importance of numbers in the increasingly democratic climate had to deal with the plurality that existed within what was known to the outsiders as Islam.

R. Miller has pointed out that one can view the notion of plurality from the following perspectives⁴.

1. As a philosophical view of the nature of truth
2. As a desirable state of affairs
3. As a description of reality
4. As an inevitable and acceptable state of affairs
5. As a problem and challenge

It is unlikely that Mawdudi (1903-1979)⁵ conceived these options in this order. But if these did present themselves to him, he would have rejected options [1-2], because they were contrary to his integrative principle of One sovereign God-one law. The [3-4] concerned the empirical observation of the phenomena of religion and thus would not

³See Henry Hughes Presler, *The Mid-India Practice of Toleration*, Delhi: ISPCK, 1996, (Henceforth cited as *The Mid-India Practice of Toleration*). The outline of the theory will be given later.

⁴Roland E Miller, "The Indian Muslim Response to Religious Pluralism", in *Christian-Muslim Dialogue: Theological and Practical Issues*, (Geneva: LWF, 1998), pp.222-223

⁵Mawdudi was founder and chief ideologue of the *Jama at-e-Islami*, an organization of the elite Muslims, which through its publication and propaganda still exercise immense influence over South Asia and beyond. Mawdudi is widely known as one of the great thinkers of the world of Islam in this century (See W C Smith, *Islam in Modern History*, (New York: The New American Library, 1957), p. 236). His speeches and works are immensely influential in contributing to Islamist ideology or Islamism shaping Islamic politics in the Indian Subcontinent, Africa and the rest of the Islamic world (for example, Mawdudi's advice on the Islamization process in Libya has been noted by D H Khalid, see "Phenomenon of Religious-Islamization" in *Mainstream*, 16, June 1979, p.20).

have been a priority for Mawdudi. Mawdudi would undoubtedly have applied the 5th option in treating plurality as a problem and challenge to his integrative vision of Islamism.

In this paper I shall outline Mawdudi's integrative ideology applied to the Muslim majority and minority states. I will attempt to show how he compromised on the strictly integrative ideology of Islamism both in relation to people of other faiths living in the majority Muslim states and within the existentially plural Islam of the subcontinent.

I. Mawdudi's Integrative Ideology

Mawdudi's Integrative Ideology is based on three Principles:

(i) No person, class ... entire population of the state ... can lay claim to sovereignty. God alone is the real sovereign; all others are ... subjects; God is ... the lawgiver and the authority of absolute legislation vests on Him. The believers cannot resort to ... independent legislation nor can they modify any law, which God has laid down, even if the desire to effect such legislation ... is unanimous. (ii) An Islamic State must, in all respects, be founded upon the law laid down by God through His prophet. (iii) The government which runs such a state will be entitled to obedience in its capacity as the political agency set up to enforce the laws of God.⁶

Elsewhere Mawdudi presents these three principles as follows:⁷

1. Unity (*tawhid*)
2. Prophethood (*ris-la*)
3. Vicegerency (*khil-fa*)

Under the first principle Mawdudi makes two positive assertions about God. The other two principles proceed from this central principle. There are two propositions under the first principle:

- that God is One
- that God is Sovereign.

⁶*Islamic Law*, p.146

⁷Mawdudi, *Human Rights in Islam*, (Aligarh: Crescent Publishing co., 1976). (Henceforth cited as *Human Rights*), p. 7.

The three principles mean that God alone has the right to command and forbid; people are under obligation to only obey Him.⁸

Mawdudi's ideology stands as an antithesis to secular democracy, which regards people as sovereign. Democracy demands, among other things, that the determination of right and wrong, consequent law making and its execution lie in the hands of people. Utilitarian and majority considerations have final and absolute authority. Changing understandings of right and wrong necessitate change in the law. Secular democracy allows the same people who make laws also to change them when they become undesirable to the majority. People are sovereign and subject at the same time. They make laws and subject themselves to them or change them when they want to. This sort of popular sovereignty has no place in Mawdudi's vision of Islamic polity.

The traditional belief that God intended man to be the *khil-fa* (vicegerent) of God on earth is rooted in the Qur'anic and *hadith* account of Adam's creation⁹. Vicegerency involves a certain exercise of authority and rulership. Vicegerency to him is a "collective right of all those who accept and admit God's absolute sovereignty over themselves and adopt the divine code, conveyed through the prophet, as the law above all laws..."¹⁰. Vicegerents are the totality of Muslim believers who submit to the One Sovereign and His laws received through the prophet having repudiated all previous national, ethnic or cultural norms. Thus all

⁸Mawdudi, *Islamic Law and Constitution*, trans. Khurshid Ahamad, (Lahore: Islamic Publications ltd., 1960), (henceforth cited as *Islamic Law*), p. 145. The section on the *Political Theory of Islam* in the book was an address delivered at Shah Chirag Mosque in Lahore, October 1939, i.e., before independence. It was printed as a tract titled *Political Theory of Islam*, (Pathankot: Maktaba-e- Jama'at-e-Islami, nd). (Henceforth cited as *Political Theory*), see p.27. Mawdudi quotes the Qur'an to support his point-see *Islamic Law*, p.145 and Surah 22:40 and Surah 3: 154.

⁹Surah 2:30-35. References to Adam and angels are found in Surah 7:11; Satan refusing to prostrate (*sujud*) to Adam in Surah 15:26-33. See also *The Translation of the Meaning of Sahih al-Bukhari*. (Arabic-English), (New Delhi: Kitab Bhavan, 1980). (Henceforth cited as *Sahih al-Bukhari*), see vol. IV, LV- "The Prophets", Chapter 1, pp. 341-347.

¹⁰Mawdudi, *The First Principles of the Islamic State*, trans. Khurshid Ahmad, (Lahore: Islamic Publications Ltd., 1978), (henceforth cited as *First Principles*), p. 25.

believers possess the right to be vicegerents. Mawdudi calls the resulting polity Islamic democracy.¹¹

A realm where the three principles of *tawhid*, *ris-la* and *khil-fa* exist as described above is the "Kingdom of God or theo-democracy".¹² This 'kingdom' is universal in scope because one God is sovereign over all¹³. It does not recognise geographical, linguistic or colour differences. Anyone who submits automatically joins the community of vicegerents that runs the Islamic State¹⁴. Since the scope for Islamic polity is universal, there is space for its expansion through the vicegerents. They are God's agents establishing knowledge of One God and securing obedience to His laws. Thus Mawdudi says: "Administrators of the Islamic state must be those whose whole life is developed to the observance and enforcement of this law..."¹⁵

The given laws of One Sovereign God do not automatically gain acceptance among all believers let alone those who are not Muslims. Although Mawdudi takes pains to maintain that vicegerency refers to the 'whole community of believers', this assertion is conceptual. The sovereign God is not personally involved in the execution and establishment of His law. There is therefore, a need for people to see that God is recognised and His laws received through his prophet are obeyed. The notion of vicegerency as applied to *all the believers* conceptually fills this gap: "The Caliphate granted by God to the faithful is the popular vicegerency and not limited one. There is no reservation in favour of any family, class or race. Every believer of God is a Caliph..."¹⁶

It seems apparent that a state where the entire population is said to govern itself on the basis of the divine laws would be ungovernable. Recognising the impossibility of this system Mawdudi qualifies his notion of vicegerency. The product of this qualification ultimately turns

¹¹Ibid. P. 26

¹²*Islamic Law*, P. 147.

¹³Ibid. P. 154

¹⁴Ibid. p.156.

¹⁵Ibid. p.155.

¹⁶Ibid. p.158.

out to be elitist.¹⁷ He speaks of the appointment of an *amir* as the head of an Islamic State and the Islamic Consultative Assembly (*Majlis al-shur*) chosen by the people.¹⁸ To begin with, his list of qualifications for the rulers is discriminating. A person can be chosen as the vicegerent of vicegerents only if he is:

- Muslim
- Male
- A sane adult
- An obedient believing(Muslim) citizen of an Islamic State.

Women and non-Muslim citizens are excluded. Muslims who move into an Islamic State also cannot participate in the governance of the State unless they renounce allegiance to the non-Islamic state they have left behind.¹⁹ This sort of repudiation offered verbally and in public marks a new chapter in their life - a new life of unconditionally pure submission to Sovereign God in the pure environment of an Islamic State.

Those who gain the confidence of the community of vicegerents undertake the role of the *amir* and the *shur*. In contrast to the 'popular sovereignty' in secular democracy, theo-democracy involves 'popular vicegerency'.²⁰

Salient features of Mawdudi's secular democracy in contrast to theo-democracy may be represented as follows:

¹⁷Mawdudi's elitism can be said to be rooted in the Qur'an (Surah 2: 30; 7:129 and in particular 6:165). The more esoteric traditions however do not subscribe to Mawdudi's sort of elitism. Certain Sufi sources redefine the notion on vicegerency to avoid elitist interpretation. For instance, see the work done by Yasien Mohamed, "Knowledge and Purification of the Soul: An Annotated Translation with Introduction of Isfah-ni's *Kit-b al-dhari a il mak-im al-shari-a (58-76; 89-92)*" in *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 9(1), 1998, 1-34. Here the vicegerency is connected to the idea of inner purification of souls (*tah-rat al-nafs*). Sufism in this sense was extremely democratizing.

¹⁸*Human Rights*, p.11.

¹⁹*First Principles*, p. 64.

²⁰*Human Rights*, P. 9.

Theo-Democracy	Secular Democracy
Sovereignty vested on one God	People are sovereign
All vicegerents obey the divine laws revealed through the prophet	People make their own laws
The chosen fulfil the wishes of the sovereign God [acting on behalf of all]	Government fulfils the wishes of the people

II. The context for Mawdudi's Islamism and Islamization²¹

a) Freedom Struggle and Democratic Nationalism in the Subcontinent

Born in 1903 in Hyderabad, India, Mawdudi lived through the years of intense struggle for political freedom from the British. The independence struggle in the Indian subcontinent was fuelled by the newfound ideology of secular nationalism based on the concept of human rights imported from the *Magna Carta* of Britain. Under this it was possible, at least in theory, to accommodate languages, religions, ethnic and political entities under one administration without sacrificing plurality. A new collective identity was already beginning to establish itself and assume a near sacred character. Mawdudi's ideas communicated through his papers and speeches furnished a sharp ideological contrast.²²

²¹The term Islamization in this paper refers to aggressive propagation of central ideas of Islamism, namely *tawhid*, *ris-la* and *khil-fa* (including certain essential practices) among the Muslim masses.

²²Mawdudi's began his writing first at the age of 17 when he became the editor of a daily paper *Taj* and little later *al-jamiat*. At the age of 26 he published his first scholarly book *al-jihad fi-al-Islam*. He began his most influential monthly journal *tajuman al-Qur'an* in 1932.

The fundamental critique of nationalism offered by Mawdudi is that people construct it. Such people ignore God and revelatory laws of God:

These principles have blighted the sacred ideals for which the messengers of God have endeavoured since the earliest of times. These satanic principles have stood as formidable obstacles and powerful adversaries against the moral and spiritual teaching embodied in the heavenly books, and against the law of God²³.

According to Mawdudi, if nationalism brings people together, it also divides them on the basis of their territorial claims. Laws of One God, in contrast, bring people of different languages, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds closer together on the basis of their common relation to the Sovereign "The law of God ... has always aimed at bringing together mankind into one moral and spiritual frame-work and make them mutually assistant to one another on a universal scale."²⁴

A predominant image of the product of nationalist ideology Mawdudi had in his mind was that of Socialism and Nazism. Mawdudi lived during a time when these were powerful ideologies. Nehru's nationalism was clearly designed after the Soviet Socialist model. Mawdudi found these repugnant and believed that these ideologies represented godless human attempt to usurp divine authority and law.²⁵ Nationalism as Mawdudi saw it involved veneration of the states or fatherlands instead of one God, charismatic leaders took the place of prophets, who unlike the prophetic revelation brought plural and often conflicting versions of constitutions. Thus he felt there was a need for the integrative Islamism.

²³Mawdudi, *Nationalism and India*, (Malihabad: Maktaba-e-Jama'at-e-Islami (Hind), 1948), p. 21.

²⁴Ibid. p.22.

²⁵Ibid. p.25. Although Mawdudi is critical of Nazi and socialist ideologies, his political theory is also fundamentally ideological. This is so because his interpretation of Islam represented the elite Muslims (*ashrafs*) interests vis-à-vis the low caste Indians who converted to Islam (*ajlaf*).

b) Impermanence of the Nations: The Case of the Subcontinent

On 10th of May 1947, a few months before independence and division of India and Pakistan, Mawdudi delivered a speech in East Punjab.²⁶ The audience consisted of Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, etc. The situation of Punjab was highly volatile. Hardly three months after this speech the birth of the two nations caused inexpressible sufferings to the millions who crossed the newly drawn boundaries. In his speech, Mawdudi outlined his theory giving reasons for the impermanence of nations. The speech is titled "Nations Rise and fall - Why?"²⁷. The tone of the speech is mild because he was addressing a mixed crowd. One can detect, however, his central critique - human desire to stake out sovereign territories, create laws and act independent of God. To Mawdudi, rise of the nation states was a necessary evil. One Sovereign however, remains ultimately in control of nation above the claims of powerful individuals and groups who usurp God's role and submit to their own laws rather than God's.²⁸

Provisionally, till the establishment of divine realm is realised fully, God evaluates the nations by using a simple yardstick: "Construction pleases God, destruction displeases Him"²⁹. God as the real Master of the universe supports every constructive effort of nations even when they do not recognise God and are led by people other than Muslims. But nations not ruled by God inevitably engage in destructive tendencies thus inviting God's judgement leading to the nation's fall and establishment of Islamism.³⁰

²⁶Prior to independence undivided Punjab formed a large part of Northwest India. East Punjab was roughly the area that fell within India after independence.

²⁷Mawdudi, *Nations Rise and Fall-Why?* (Delhi: Markazi Maktaba Islami, 1979) [Henceforth cited as *Nations Rise*].

²⁸Ibid. p.2.

²⁹Ibid. p.3.

³⁰The constructive tendency has to do with the effort of the vicegerents of God to establish, maintain, and develop virtues and prevent and eradicate evils "abhorrent to God". See *Human Rights*, p.9

Mawdudi illustrates his theory of 'construction' and 'destruction' by giving his interpretation of causes of the rise and fall of nations. The theory seems rather simplistic because Mawdudi does not provide deeper bases for his theory of 'construction and destruction'.³¹

- The Aryans were God's instruments in increasing 'constructive' dimensions of grater India
- When their constructive energy was spent and they actually became instruments promoting 'destruction' [for instance, the high castes ruling over of the low castes on the basis of the laws of *Manu*] God sent Muslims to India.³² But the Muslim rulers and the aristocrats succumbed to the same temptation as their predecessors and thereby increased the destructive tendencies. They were punished because they had a narrow vision. They were Muslims but guilty of limiting their influence to politics and had no wide integrative vision.³³
- The British were permitted to assume power in India to undo damage done by Muslim rulers. God expelled the British from India because they were found guilty of the same tendencies as their predecessors.

The 'freedom' of India from foreign rulers was, according to Mawdudi, not final. It was for him one among many changes God was

³¹*Nations Rise*, pp.9-17.

³²This point will be elaborated later in the paper.

³³Mawdudi's theory of rise and fall of states seems to apply to Muslim majority states like Turkey as well. It has been pointed out that Islamism in Turkey had a class basis. In the 60s Turkey maintained high industrial output and was able to distribute the proceeds relatively well among the people on account of their ideology of national development. The balance between rapid growth and class coalitions could not however be sustained very long. The ideology of 'developmentalist socialism' broke down. The rise of Islamism coincided with the demise of class coalition. The class coalition was between the big industrialists of large cities and small guilds of businessmen, shop owners etc., from smaller towns. Thus the old class alliance was between the Muslim elite. The rural folk were not participants of this alliance. Islamism addressed this individualism of the elite classes and offered a new basis for unity and a new identity based on the unitive Islamist vision. Haldun Gulalp, *Political Islam in Turkey: The Rise and Fall of the Refah Party*, in *The Muslim World*, Vol. LXXXIX, no.1, January, 1999, pp.22-41.

bringing about to cause reformation of human life and human movement towards recognising the ultimate divine sovereignty laws.

This moment ... is one of those turning points in history when the real Sovereign of the earth brings the rule of one authority to an end and decides to transfer the administration of a country to a new authority... God did not...install these foreigners in power without a purpose, nor is he ousting them without reason. God did not dispossess the natives of their rule without a cause, nor will he reinstate them in power without a design. The people of India stand as candidates for power today. The Hindus, the Muslims, the Sikhs – all demand power... but this is not a permanent dispensation...³⁴

Nowhere in his speech following the above quotation does Mawdudi doubt God's ultimate power over world events, claimants to power and rulers. He assumes that the entire stretch of history is a ground, which God is constantly tending. The good He has sown through His revelation will finally succeed in showing that there is One God, one law and the unity of His representatives who on His behalf, establish and maintain the divine will. In His Kingdom, ultimately the good replaces all other claims of power, which enhance destructive tendencies in opposition to God.³⁵

c) Islamic Revolution: The Final Dispensation

In his address to the students of Aligarh Muslim University (close to Delhi), Mawdudi identifies Islamism as the final dispensation through which God will establish his Kingdom.³⁶ The world, according to him, is soon going to witness the final burst of Islamic revolution. God will then establish good and constructive elements of life, the highest of which is in recognising that there is One God and that all human beings need to submit to His laws.

³⁴*Nations rise*, pp.16-17

³⁵*Ibid.* Seen in particular "How you rectify matters?", pp.26 ff.

³⁶Mawdudi, *Process of Islamic Revolution*, (Pathankot: Maktaba-e-jam'at-e-Islami, 1947).

Islam as the final revolution will not just be political and administrative like the Muslim rule in India that was replaced by the British; it will effect a total ideological transformation of the world. The model for this final success of the universal Islamic revolution comes from the early Islam of Arabia - from Muhammad's own time:

It seems strange that, while during the space of thirteen years, only three hundred persons embraced Islam. In the latter ten years the whole country of Arabia adopted this religion wholesale... The matter is quite plain. So long as life had not been actually planned and organized on the basis of this new ideology people could understand what this novel type of leader wanted to do... Only men of ... understanding ... could believe in Muhammad ... men whose realistic vision could see clearly that the salvation of mankind lay in this new creed. But when a complete system of life was built upon this ideology and people has actual experience of it... it was then that they understood... [and] it became impossible to deny this open reality. Gentlemen! This is the method by which Islam seeks to bring about Islamic revolution.³⁷

Interestingly, Aligarh University was a source and a centre for Muslim ideology that supported the Indian national freedom movement. Aligarh movement was parochial from Mawdudi's integrative Islamist vision point of view. Mawdudi attempted to draw the attention of ideologues and students alike to his conviction that political 'freedom' was a mere phase in the experience of nations. Freedom of India and Pakistan is not to be the end of the divine vision envisaged by the Prophet. Muhammad envisioned an Islamic revolution with unambiguous and total knowledge of God as the only sovereign. Islamic revolution was not just for political authority. Islamic political authority merely creates an environment for the establishment of the true understanding of Islam (submission to One God). Thus Islamism incorporated every aspect of human life on earth. Nothing was conceived outside its pale.

³⁷Ibid. p.54-55.

Mawdudi theorized that just as the establishment of Islam as a political entity in Madina ensured the phenomenal growth of Islam during Muhammad's own time, the establishment of Islamic political rule in a nation like Pakistan will enhance the effects of Islamic revolution.

Mawdudi expected a change of heart among the ideologues and students of Aligarh University. Thus, in his final remarks he clearly placed before them his hope of Islamic revolution:

I am... addressing the students of Aligarh and placing before them the plan of that movement for bringing about a social revolution of an Islamic nature. I have done my duty and communicated to you whatever I had in mind. The responsibility of changing your hearts does not lie on me.³⁸

Mawdudi wrote in the context of rising national consciousness and the aftermath of freedom where secular democracy was adopted as the political basis for governance both in India and Pakistan. He rejected nationalism as another form of apostasy and idolatry. It was for him a human attempt at creating a parallel system of polity that defied the Sovereign and His laws. But, he saw 'freedom' as a phase in the world history that would eventually give way to the establishment of God's Kingdom and His laws.

He understood the creation of a Muslim State [Pakistan] in terms of the nascent Muslim polity in Madina. The tiny community in Madina understood its role in terms of the entire universe when the entire life of Madinese Muslims was infused by the new ideology. Creation of Pakistan provided a positive environment within which Islamism could take birth and expand. Just as the birth of Madina the first Islamist city state, led to the expansion of Islam in Arabia during the prophet's own time, Mawdudi hoped Pakistan could well become the modern Madina.

³⁸Ibid. p.57.

III. Awareness of Plurality with in Islam and the Role of the Elite in India

It was clear however, that 'Islamism' could not be applied to India immediately. Thus in India a different strategy had to be used.³⁹ The influx of democratic ideals had exposed intra-religious incompatibilities between the elite Muslims and the Indian converts to Islam organized in their respective sub-groups. Awareness of intra-religious plurality might have been one of the background impulses leading to the development of his political theory and its application on the masses of Indian Muslims who were seen as harbouring 'heterodoxy' and thus represented a challenge for the elite Muslims.

H. Presler has written about two kinds of 'disjunction'⁴⁰. When applied to Islam in India, I think, Presler's theory of 'disjunction' throws light on Mawdudi's Islamization of the Indian Muslims.

1. Disjunction between Religions

Religious groups or endogamous circles [EC] do not associate with each other on account of ethnic, economical, social or theological disjunction

2. Disjunction between Sub-groups within a Religion

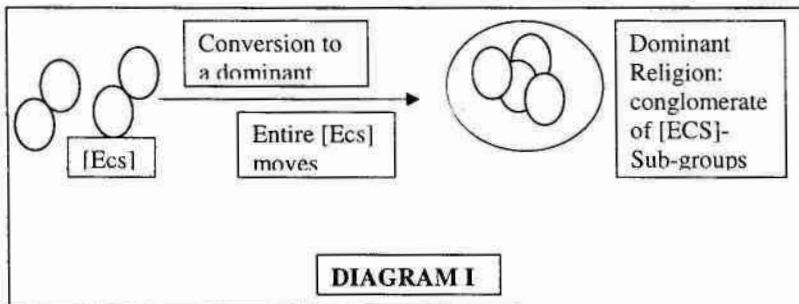
Sub-groups within a particular religion remain distant from each other on account of ethnic, economical, social or theological disjunction

The **diagram I** below illustrates that when a religious community or EC adopts a dominant religion it brings with its old social, economic, ethnic and theological baggage and assumes the role of a sub-group within the religion of their choice. Thus some of the old

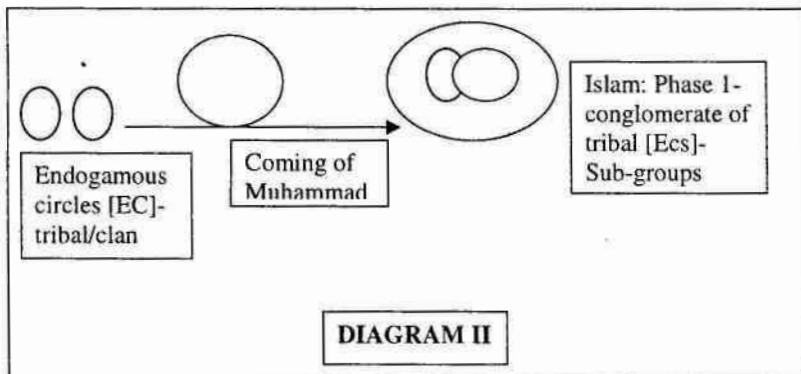
³⁹See Mawdudi, *Let us be Muslims*, ed. Khurram Murad, (Delhi: Markazi Maktaba Islami, 1987). This is a translation of Mawdudi's *Khu t b-t*. It is a collection of ordinary details of what it means to be a Muslim for common Indian converts to Islam. The themes are selected on the basis of Mawdudi's observation of the Indian Muslims and their knowledge of Islam. For instance, how they treat the Qur'an, who is a true Muslim, meaning of *kalimah*, false gods and surrender to God, meaning of obedience and worship etc.

⁴⁰*Practice of Toleration.*

incompatibilities continue. Factors that keep people distant from each other (1) also keep co-religionist at (2) distant from each other. But in the case of (2), the incompatibilities are tolerated or ritually justified thereby creating a positive environment. Mutual crossing-over of individuals between sub-groups becomes possible without having to permanently break away from their respective groups.

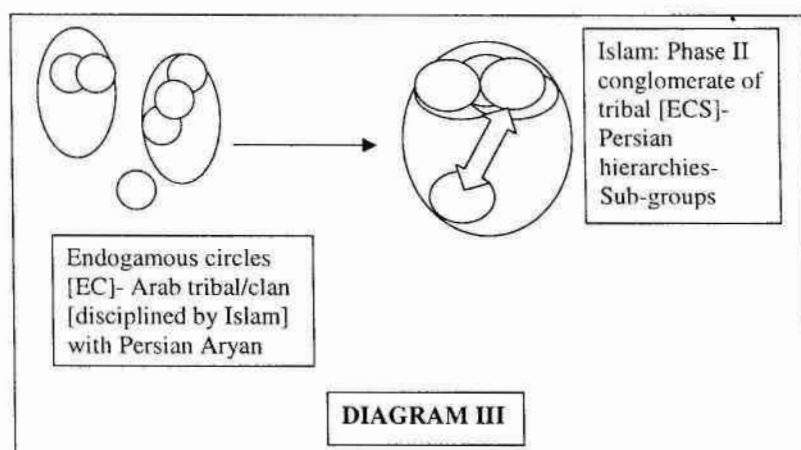


The **Diagram II** below shows that pre-Islamic Arabs were divided into tribes and clans based on ancient kinship, traditions, rivalries, feuding and violence. These disjunction were in theory disciplined by 'egalitarian Islam'⁴¹.



⁴¹See Surah XL IX:13; IX:2.

Diagram III below shows that when 'ritually equal' Muslim Arabs conquered Aryan Persians in 640 CE, they encountered newer kinds of incompatibilities.⁴² For instance, inequalities based on urban, economic, social, racial and theological differences and uniquely Aryan notion of *varnadharma*.⁴³ A fusion of two culture-groups took place and the Persian Aryan systems were adopted in practice. The Persian serfs continued as a distinct subgroup with the system but the distinctions were tolerated.



Consequently, beginning from the 12th century, Muslim conquerors of the Indian subcontinent were distinctly divided into Religious doctors (*ulam* and Sufis), nobility (ruling class), merchants and serfs sub-groups. A complex socio-political system harbouring sub-group disjunction was already within India when Muslims arrived because the Aryans had

⁴²See *Practice of Toleration*.

⁴³Away of life and sub-group incompatibilities based on colour in a particular religious system. For instance white denoting highest class, red denoting ruling elite, gold denoting business class and black or brown denoting out-caste-servants-slaves.

preceded Muslims into India. This system was based on colour and racial disjunction and is also called 'Caste'.⁴⁴

The **Diagram IV** below shows that a large number of Buddhists and the low-castes in the subcontinent converted to Islam. These converts were placed alongside the serfs in the social hierarchy that was already existent within Islam. Foreign Muslim rulers though a minority in the subcontinent's Islam, naturally saw themselves as racially superior (*ashraf*)⁴⁵ to the great numbers of low-caste Muslims converts (*ajlaf*).⁴⁶ This system allowed the low-caste converts to continue their distinctive practices and also permitted crossing-overs of the *ashrafs* to the 'heterodox' institutions of the *ajlafs*.⁴⁷

⁴⁴Aryans used the term *dharma* [form *dhr-* meaning 'to hold' or 'that, which holds'. Thus religiously Aryan *dharma* [erroneously called Hinduism] was a conglomerate of various religious visions, sects, philosophies [theistic and atheistic] and sociologically Aryan way of life brought together class, color, ethnic-racial incompatibilities and integrated them all in a cohesive system, justified by myths that enabled co-religionists to tolerate disjunction. This system containing complex incompatibilities was called *varnadharma*. *Varnadharma* or caste in India contained within it four basic sub-groups corresponding to the Aryan-Persian sub-groups-

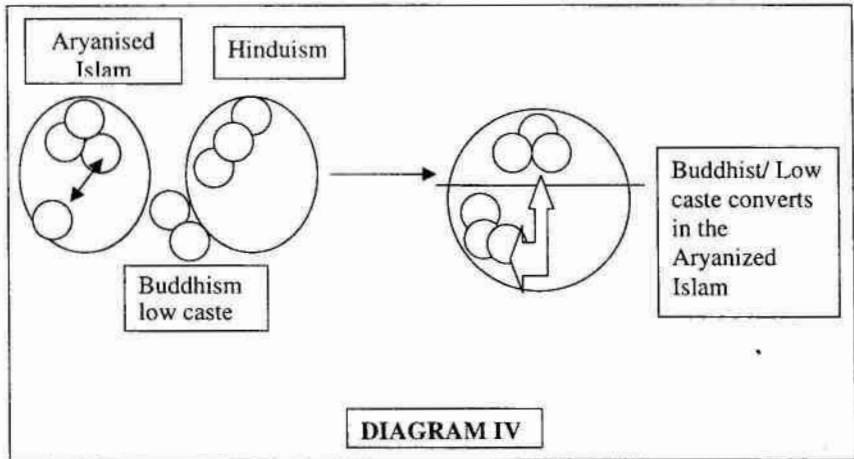
Level I: *Brahmins; Khshatriyas* [Minority/belonging to the original Aryan stock]; *Vaishyas*

Level II: *Sudras* [Majority/original inhabitants who were conquered and integrated in the system].

⁴⁵The foreigners were divided into class groups similar to the Indian caste. *Ashrafs* were one of the several levels among them. For the sake of convenience I am using the term *Ashraf* to refer to the entire group of Muslim foreigners.

⁴⁶See Yoginder Sikand, "The Changing Nature of Religious Authority in Twentieth Century South Asian Islam" in *The Bulletin*, Vol. 16, nos. 1 and 2, January-June 1997, pp.5-22. (Henceforth cited as "South Asian Islam").

⁴⁷See appendix 1: Case 1



The shifting of the power balance from the *ashraf* to the British after the so-called 'mutiny' in 1857 CE was a grave crisis for the *ashraf* ruling class. When *ashrafs* were ruling over the majority of non-Muslims and the kingdom was stable, State sponsored a religious ideology, which was more universalistic⁴⁸. But, when a minority of Muslim elite rulers were outnumbered by the Muslim converts from among the ruled states and the elite political power was destabilizing, the elite became more inward looking and their religious policy became more religiously militant and 'orthodox'. They began to see disjunction between them and the *ajlafs*, which had been ignored in most cases. They felt that the *ajlafs* were weakening the elite Muslims' combined economic and ideological power in a context of the rising external political challenge. The *ajlafs*' ideological visions were considered heresies and they were blamed for having caused the wrath of God upon Islam on account of their un-Islamic practices that they had imported into Islam.

⁴⁸A. Kevin Reinhart in his *Before Revelation: The Boundaries of Muslim Moral Thought*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995). For instance, Reinhart points out that during the Abbasid caliphate Islamic revelation was understood as a 'confirmation' of the universal religious knowledge of God and his laws.

The *ashrafs* undertook a massive programme of Islamization in a bid to purging the *ajlafs* of 'un-Islamic' practices and thereby creating conditions for the return of Muslim political power. It was for this reason that Islamization was singularly led by the *ashrafs*, among whom Mawdudi was one of the most important figures⁴⁹. Islamization was a tool through which the *ashrafs* attempted to integrate the *ajlafs* with in his vision of 'Islam'. Mawdudi's 'democracy' was in this context an attempt to integrate vast numbers of Indian converts in concept within his Islamic political ideology. In reality it was no different from the Pakistani elite who hungered for power. His was an ideologically 'Islamic' alternative to create a way in which the elite would continue to remain powerful politically.⁵⁰

Two factors to do with the colonial administrators must be kept in focus in this background, because these aided the process of Islamization:

- 1) When the British established their paramountacy in the subcontinent:
 - a) The British were a minority ruling over a majority made up of disparate religious traditions, ethnic and language backgrounds. They subscribed to a political ideology, which sought to create space for plurality.
 - b) The British law supervened *Shari-a* in principle
 - c) The Muslim ruling classes were stripped of political power
 - d) The British left them in charge of their religion and customs to regulate religious-personal-family matters.⁵¹

⁴⁹See Altaf Gauhar, "Mawl-n- Abul A-I- Mawdudi – A Personal Account" in *Islamic Perspectives: Studies in Honour of...Mawdudi*, eds. K Ahmad and Z I Asari, (Delhi: Markazi Maktaba Islami, 1987). pp.265-288. Though not all elite followed Mawdudi's line. Particularly in regions where Muslims were a majority the ruling elite had also established a close relations with the British in hope of gaining an opportunity to rule after the British left. Such elite opposed Mawdudi. It was for this reason that after the creation of Pakistan Mawdudi was branded as a threat in Pakistan.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹There is evidence for this process of mutual benefit from the British administration in Malaysia. See "South Asian Islam" pp. 7-9 and 9-10.

This arrangement was beneficial for both parties. It was an opportunity for the British to circumscribe the influence of *Shari-a*, but for the Muslim elite it was an opportunity to extend their influence over the vast majority of Indian Muslim who were largely ignored. Political influence was not possible when the British were in power, but they were free to define their religion and prescribe a code of conduct to govern religious and personal affairs. It was the only way that the elite could continue to wield influence over the masses.⁵²

2) Loss of *ashrafs* political power narrowed the actual gulf between the *ashrafs* and the *ajlafs*. The British aided this process by identifying subjects under religious categories such as Hindus, Sikhs, Christians and Muslims. Thus the *ashrafs* and the *ajlafs* were statistically clubbed together, just as the *high-low* caste Hindus were clubbed together. The statistical swelling of Muslim numbers achieved something significant. It caused a powerful movement called *shuddhi*.⁵³ With the coming of the British secular democratic ideals first began to show signs of appearing. Appearance of democratic ideals convinced the elite among Hindus and Muslims that their numerical strength was an important criterion for political participation and power. The high caste Hindus saw Muslim numbers swelling as a result of the British census and interpreted this to mean that Muslims were increasing in power. They therefore, launched the *shuddhi* campaign. Significantly, the revivalist *Araya Samaj* (Fellowship of *Aryans*) led this moment. A *Gujarati* (West Indian) Brahmin Swami Daynand Saraswati (1824-1883) was the founder of the *samaj*. Swami Shradhananda, his disciple started the actual *shuddhi* campaign in 1923. *Arya samaj* and *shuddhi* concentrated on the recovery of *aryadharma* (Aryan religion with its caste system), which meant religious-conversion and reintegration of common Muslims back into the caste hierarchy so as to increase the high-caste political clout.

⁵²Evidence for this process in the British colonies like Malaysia is found in William Rolf's work. See William R. Rolf, "Patterns of Islamization in Malaysia, 1890s-1990s: Exemplars, Institutions and Vectors" in *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 9 (2), 1998, 21-228.

⁵³A movement led by the high-caste Hindus who sought to reconvert the *Ajlafs* so as to re-integrate them into the Hindu caste system and thereby increase their power in the politically fragile and fragmented context.

The *ashrafs* reacted to this. Their political rule was taken away from them and now their power base, which was centred on the great number of the Indian converts to Islam, was threatened by *shuddhi*.⁵⁴ Thus Islamic political theory of Mawdudi in its basic form represented the *ashrafs*' attempt to recreate conditions for strengthening elite Muslim political base in places where they had ruled prior to the coming of British.

What seems evident is that Mawdudi's 'political theory' was in part a vision of a small minority of elite Muslims who saw themselves as racially pure Arab-Aryans. In order to accomplish their political ambitions they created a political theory in which they saw their role in religious terms: as **the chosen vicegerents of One Sovereign God**. The majority of Muslims were kept out of the elite vision of the Kingdom of God. Despite attempts at narrowing disjunction between the two sub-groups through Islamization of the *ajlafs*, in reality the *ashrafs* attempted to use the *ajlafs*' sheer number as a way towards solidifying political base. The colonial policies aided this process.

Mawdudi's notion of One sovereign God was part of the *ashraf* attempt to Islamize *ajlaf* and reform of the plurality of religious visions within Islam of the subcontinent that had according to him, compromised on the unitive vision of Islam. The popular Islam was too democratic a system for the elite to be comfortable. The multiplicity of religious routes was perceived as source of weakening of elite power and influence. This meant that the majority of Indian Muslims remained notionally linked to the elite or 'orthodox' institutions, but they preserved and frequented the 'heterodox' institutions where the *pirs* (dead saint) and *muj-virs* (mediums) exercised immense power over the masses.

Assertion of the sovereignty of One God-one law crystallized in this context. The continuance of the heterodox institutions is evidence of the fact that Islamization never fully replaced the 'heterodox routes'. What it succeeded in achieving was to create a new sense of conceptual and uniform religious identity among the Indian Muslims. The Muslim

⁵⁴Ibid. pp.10-11.

masses after Islamization became aware of the essentials of Islamic beliefs and practices as defined by the elite. The essential content of such a reformation was the focus on one God-one law. The *ashrafs* however, allowed the 'heterodox' routes to exist within Islam in practice and often themselves crossed over to them in crisis.⁵⁵

IV. The Two Foci of Mawdudi's Political Theory and the People of other Faiths

Mawdudi considered the double pronged plurality engendered by secular democracy and conversion of the Indian low castes and the Buddhist as a problem and challenge. In stating his Islamism with reference to the Muslim majority states Mawdudi seems rigid and strictly integrative, but in reality the strict Islamist ideology had to be tempered and compromised. The Islamist ideology also had to be tempered in the context of plurality within the Indian Islam.

It has been noted above that Mawdudi's political theory had two foci: one for those states where Muslims were a majority and the other for those states where they were in minority. India and Pakistan were his immediate test cases. In the former case Mawdudi felt that the integrative Islamist ideology had a favourable environment for its establishment⁵⁶. It was from here that such an integrative vision was to

⁵⁵At the political plane the model showing how sub-groups continue into larger and more dominant entities can also be demonstrated using examples from works done on North Africa, Middle East and Turkey. Space would not permit a detailed discussion on this here. An example of Palestine may however briefly cited. It has been stated that Palestine identity is complex. It involves Palestinian local identity. Pan-Arab-pan Islamic identity. Pan-Arabism was the dominant entity and local Palestinian elite saw it as the way to preserve their local identity against the Zionist challenge. This happened in the general background of the fall of the Arab government in Damascus in 1920 and the defining of Palestine borders by the British. See *Palestine Documents*, ed. Zafarul-Islam Khan (New Delhi: Pharos and Institute of Islamic and Arab Studies, 1998) and Yezid Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State: The Palestine National Movement, 1949-1993*, (Washington DC: Institute for Palestine Studies and Clarendon Press, 1997).

⁵⁶Mawdudi, *Isl-mi Q-nun awr Pakistan men us ke us Nif-dh ki -Amali Tad-bir* trans. *Islamic Law and its Introduction in Pakistan* (Lahore: 1948/1955). For details of his vision of non-Muslims in Islamic States see Mawdudi, *Isl-mi Hukumat men*

grow beyond the state territories to realise the full universal potential of Islamism⁵⁷.

In his vision of universe there is ideologically no place for plurality of political and religious disjunction. In his Islamist vision for the majority Muslim states Mawdudi had to grapple with the reality of plurality. Mawdudi limited the scope of minority communities' freedom by allowing plurality to exist only at the levels of human rights and religious faiths. He made sure that no **plural political version** existed in an Islamic State because that would have been dangerous for the central elite concern for power.

I have said that the establishment of the British power led to the application of universalism, and acceptance of plurality and compromise. After the British left, the governments of nations where Islam was a minority like in India and Thailand chose the pluralist model of governance. This was an encouraging development for the minorities because the stable government instituted positive policies for the minorities⁵⁸. Like the British then, the Indian government might have seen this as a way to **circumscribe the influence of religious law to family-personal affairs**, but recognition of such plurality also led to freedom for the elite Muslims to assert their power over the Muslim masses. Islamization was the outcome of this process⁵⁹.

Secular system of governance finds itself on a stable ground because of the radical separation of religion from the state. Secular states are open to allowing plurality within them, because their system ensures

Dhimmiyo n Ke Huquq, trans. *Rights of Non-Muslims in an Islamic State*, (Lahore: 1948/1961).

⁵⁷See Mawdudi, *Ittih-d-l-Alam-l Isl-mil* trans. *Unity of the Muslim World* (Lahore: n.d/1967).

⁵⁸For instance recognition of the religious holidays and establishment of *shari-a* courts to govern the religious and family affairs of Muslims.

⁵⁹One can see this process in action in the context of Thailand. See R. Scupin, "Muslim Accommodation in Thai Society" in *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 9 (2), 1998. 229-258.

that freedom of religion is essential right of the individuals and constitutionally this right is not likely to interfere with the political governance. It is perhaps for this reason that in the US and UK it is possible for Muslims to build religious institutions, engage in active *tabligh* (propagation), hold religious demonstration, find asylum and publish and distribute religious materials freely⁶⁰

Same level of freedom and appreciation of plurality, or ability to deal with plurality as enshrined by the secular ideology might still be difficult in the majority Muslim states because traditionally, Muslim states **do not separate religious rights from political rights**⁶¹. It is difficult for many Muslim states to fully conceive the British strategy of granting freedom to minorities within purely religious sphere in order to safe-guard the political interests.

The so-called 'constitution of Mecca'⁶² is known to have been relatively more tolerant of the minorities than *al-shurut al-umariyya*

⁶⁰In the event of Kashmir crisis, the British Muslim stage processions hold political meeting and guerrilla training in the mosques to augment the Pakistani backed infiltration in the Indian Kashmir, but the British authorities allow such things to happen right under their noses! See Sanjay Suri "Fanatical Zeal in English Climes" in *Outlook*, June 1999, p.22.

⁶¹With some exceptions to Indonesia, though even Indonesia is going through Muslim-Christian riots. One can perhaps put these riots down to economic and political instability. Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi', "Christian-Muslim relations in the Twenty-first Century: Lessons from Indonesia" in *Islamochristiana*, 24, 1998, 19-35. Indonesia has so far succeeded in attempting to balance in concept, the idea of Islamic State and plurality. It has succeeded so far in doing so by having two levels of identities. One, *International identity (for the sake of the Muslim state)*- here the face of the Indonesia as the state subscribing to the idea of One God and certain distinctive Islamic practices are maintained. Two, *national identity*, here Indonesia is presented as a modern state promoting unity among disparate elements on the basis of common language, customs, common struggle against the colonial rulers (The Dutch) and national prosperity.

⁶²"*Dhimma*" in EL2II, pp. 227-231. See also Mawdudi, *Ist-mi Dastur ki Buny-den* trans. *Fundamentals of the Islamic Constitution* (Lahore: 1952/1952) and *Dasturi Sif-*

(stipulations of Umar) or the charter of Umar⁶³. The 'charter of Umar' has been known to represent a hardening of Muslim policy towards minorities even though in most likelihood it was an apocryphal document⁶⁴. It became in time the basic 'Islamic' reference for rulers seeking to relate to non-Muslims. This was the period in which Islam, as a political force was not fully established. The Abbasids however, consolidated the Muslim Empire. In the context of greater security and political stability under them the policy towards the minorities was more lenient. Medieval Islam saw a reversal of the trend under the Abbasids, when the 'charter of Umar' began to be considered essential part of *Shari-ah*.⁶⁵

Today, the Muslim countries feel drawn to this charter primarily because traditionally the charter has been thought to be an essential part of *Shari-ah*. The *Shari-ah* is the sacred law. It is considered the better choice to obey *Shari-ah* than the secular charters. Thus for instance, issue of plurality is a concern stemming from the notion of respect for variant opinions and choices of individuals and groups. But for a *Shari-ah* abiding Muslim, concern to establish knowledge and obedience of One God is a matter of obedience of the law of the Sovereign⁶⁶.

The charter itself is very discriminating against the minorities and clearly it meant to address rulers' concern to determine the nature of relations with minorities of which Christians were chief.

They 'shall not build new churches or convents or cells or hermitages (for monks) in their towns and the countryside around. They shall not renew those (of these places) that fall in ruins. They

rish-t par Tanqid: Isl-mi awr Jamhuri Nuqta-I Nazar se (A Critique of the Constitutional Proposal from the Islamic and Democratic Viewpoints), (Karachi: n.d.).

⁶³See text of Umar's charter on *Etudes Arabes*, 1991, pp. 80-81.

⁶⁴See G. Scattolin, "Sufuism and Law in Islam: A Text of Ibn Arabi... on Protected People (*ahi al-dhimma*)" in *Islamochristiana*, 24, 1998, pp. 35 ff.

⁶⁵*Ibid.* pp. 48-49.

⁶⁶Mawdudi, *Four Basic Qur'anic Terms*, (Delhi: Markazi Maktaba Islami, 1995). See note on p. 100 for Mawdudi's opinion on *shari-a* vis-a-vis the notion of human rights. See also Mawdudi, *Ins-n ke Buny-di Huquq* (Fundamental Rights of Man) (Lahore: 1963).

shall not hinder (the use) of their churches to Muslims... They shall not give shelter to spies... They shall not teach their children the Koran. They shall not show (the sign of) their associationism (*irk*)... They shall... stand up from their seats whenever they (Muslims) want to sit. They shall not try to resemble Muslims in anything as regards clothes, hat... the way of combing. They shall not ride on saddle neither shall they gird themselves with swords nor possess any kind of weapon. They shall not show their crosses or their books... They shall not bury their dead near those of Muslims. They shall not strike their bells (hard)... neither shall they raise their voices while reading in their churches... Should they infringe anything of the stipulations (*urut*)... they will have no right to protection....⁶⁷

The text limits freedom of Christians **both in the political and religious fronts.**

Mawdudi in contrast follows the British and the Indian strategy of limiting minorities' freedom to certain essential human rites and religious affairs. Minorities were however, kept out of participation in the political and defence affairs of the state.

In contexts where Muslims were a minority, like in India, Mawdudi adopted a different strategy. He concentrated on Islamization of the Indian Muslim with an eventual hope of establishing elite power and hence the integrative Islamist visions. The examination of the Islamization process has however, shown that despite Islamization, intra-religious sub-groups within Islam were allowed to continue with their pre-conversion disjunction. The Muslim elite had to make certain adjustments, for Islamization did not succeed in replacing the 'heterodox routes'. Certain amount of socialization and compromise took place and in the end the elite made space for plurality within the Indian Islam.

Mawdudi's vision for minorities was at least in the religious realm more flexible than the charter of *Umar*. His Islamization also did not

⁶⁷ See the text of Umar quoted in G Scattolin, "Sufism and Law in Islam: A Text of Ibn Arabi on Protected People (*ahl al-dhimma*)", in *Islamochristiana*, 24 (1998), p. 45.

push the integrative vision too far in order to establish a 'monistic' religious entity. One feels that if an Islamic State chose to adopt Mawdudi's version of Islamism, there does not seem any reason for the Christian minorities to feel threatened. This is as long as they remains aloof from politics and do not carry their freedom beyond the delimitation of their own religious institutions, personal and family matters.

The discussion above has also indicated that Mawdudi attempted to Islamize the *ajlaf* in order to bring about greatest possibility of similarity centring on the belief in one God and certain external practices. His Islamization was not pressed further than this. The Indian Muslims were allowed tacitly to maintain their heterodox institutions, beliefs and practices, even those institutions that were clearly Hinduistic and idolatrous-religious practices and beliefs, which qualified the *ajlaf* to be included in a separate category of 'religion'.

Conclusion

I began by observing that the colonial rule facilitated the ideas of secularism, democracy and nationalism in the Muslim world. It was observed that Muslim intellectuals generally understood secularism, democracy and nationalism to involve ignorance about God. For them the rule of the majority was based on extra-revelatory sources and reification of national boundaries. While it seems true that secularism and democracy create space for plurality of laws and nations as also the religious plurality. Muslim elite like Mawdudi treated plurality as a problem. In response to the perceived problem Mawdudi, for instance, formulated an integrative ideology based on the idea of One sovereign God-one law.

The Muslim elite had largely ignored the Indian masses that converted to Islam during the various phases of their rule over the subcontinent. The Muslim elite became aware of the need for the Indian Muslim masses realizing the importance of numbers in the increasing democratic climate. But, the elite had to deal with the plurality that the converted Indian masses brought along with them into Islam.

In this context, I attempted to show that Mawdudi had a double objective. He sought to show that in places where Muslims were a majority, Islamism could be applied in order to counter the effects of plurality bred by modern western secularism. His strategy for India however was different. Using Presler's theory of disjunction I attempted to analyse Mawdudi's 'Islamization'. The analysis showed that Islamization did not succeed in removing 'pre-Islamic' disjunction from the Indian Muslim masses. The elite had to set aside their objectives of removing plurality in the Indian Islam. Thus the 'heterodox institutions', practices and beliefs continued among the converts. Compromise thus established made it possible for some *ashrafs* to cross over to the 'heterodox' institutions in times of crisis.

Based on the above I suggested that:

- 1) Mawdudi's Islamism in its strict ideological garb is exclusive and does not allow plurality - political or religious. Mawdudi however, following the example of the British thought of granting limited freedom and protection to minorities in the realm of his Islamist State. He did so by circumscribing their freedom to the religious, personal and family fronts. Mawdudi's policy for minorities prevented them from participating in political and defence affairs of the state that being an elite Muslim preserve.
- 2) Also in regions where Muslims are a minority, as in the case of India, Mawdudi's Islamization was not as strictly unitive as it sounds in theory. In the case of the *ajlafs*, I showed that a tacit compromise was made. The compromise was conducive to unofficial recognition of *ajlaf* with their plurality of beliefs and practices as a sub-group. The compromise also created conditions for *ashraf* individuals and families to cross over to the *ajlaf* institutions in times of need.

I made a note of the fact that if Mawdudi's brand of Islamism were to be applied to a Muslim majority state, one can be sure that the minorities would be granted freedom in religious fields.

APPENDIX 1**Case 1**

On campus C the graves are of two saints who were brothers. There is an unpaid *mujavir* whose brother acts as caretaker of the sacred site. Great numbers of illiterates come from outside the campus on the festival days (illiteracy rate of the city being 85%). The *mujavir* experiences ecstasy on celebration days. He divines sources and cures of illness, promises remedies for personal difficulties, and gives flowers imbued with impersonal supernatural Powers. Among the crowds on one festival evening, two Muslim strangers appeared. Their clothing and bearing showed they were educated. They did not approach the graves nor consult the ecstatic but stood apart. They covered their heads with handkerchiefs, recited the *fatiha*, and went away⁶⁸.

⁶⁸*The Mid India Practice of Toleration*, p. 16