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In the writings of Hindu publicists[1] in the colonial United Provinces (henceforth UP), women featured—as in most debates on socio-religious reforms and reconstitution of patriarchies—in significant ways. Although women were sometimes party to the codes of behaviour suggested, the regulations largely implied control of women by men, and of lower classes by the higher classes. With increasing assertions of religious community identities, gender issues and the regulating of women became a further means of defining and contributing to sharper divisions between Hindus and Muslims. This essay is concerned with the all-out attempts made by Hindu pamphleteers and campaigners especially to keep Hindu women away from Muslim men, as well as from symbols, customs and culture perceived as 'Muslim'.[2] These attempts reached a peak in the 1920s, when the 'abduction' of

*Acknowledgements: I am grateful to Professor Peter Robb, Prem Chowdhry and Jeremy Seabrook for their comments on earlier drafts of this essay. A brief version of the essay was presented at a conference on 'Ideas and Institutions in Twentieth-Century India' held at the University of Cambridge on 7 November 1998.

[1] I have used the term 'publicists' throughout this essay to signify those who used the public media to promulgate a particular 'Hindu' point of view, and through their speeches, meetings and writings, asserted community differences and communal antagonisms. Many of them were influenced by, or were members of, the Arya Samaj, but it also includes some Sanatan Dharmists, Hindu Mahasabha activists, Hindi literati, Congress members and leaders of various caste associations.

[2] There have been meaningful works on the relationship between women and the Hindu Right in present-day India. See Amrita Basu, ed., *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, Vol. 25(4), 1993; Tanika Sarkar and Urvashi Butalia, eds, *Women and the Hindu Right: A Collection of Essays*, Delhi, 1995; Kamla Bhasin, Ritu Menon and Nighat Said Khan, eds, *Against All Odds: Essays on Women, Religion and Development from India and Pakistan*, Delhi, 1994; Zoya Hasan, ed., *Forging Identities: Gender, Communities and the State in India*, Delhi, 1994; Kumari Jayawardena and Malathi de Alwis, eds, *Embodied Violence: Communalising Women's Sexuality in South Asia*, Delhi, 1996. However, very few have dealt with the colonial period before Partition.

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Hindu women became one of the key factors polarising Hindu–Muslim politics, and arguments in favour of widow remarriage took on new contours and shapes, targeting Muslims and expressing an anxiety over declining Hindu numbers. Not only any intimate liaison but also day-to-day interactions with Muslims were perceived as a serious threat to the Hindu patriarchal order. My interest here is to emphasise how 'everyday' life was a significant arena of assertions, leading to a new set of instructions for Hindu women, produced out of fantasies and anxieties about their relations with Muslim men.[3] The essay is concerned more with an analysis of the discourse and campaign of the Hindu publicists, and an account of the publicity and attitudes it implied, and thus offers hints and speculations, but no definite conclusions about actual consequences.

The daily social intercourse between Hindus and Muslims, the relative malleability and fuzziness of religious and cultural boundaries in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century India, and the growing fractures in this arena in the later period have been the subject of much interest and debate.[4] It has also been argued that many earlier symbiotic activities had their basis in popular culture and in the sharing of rituals, beliefs, practices and festivals. Richard Eaton in his thought provoking study remarks:

> To understand premodern Bengali society on its own terms requires suspending the binary categories typical of modern observers. . . . Instead of visualizing two separate and self-contained social groups, Hindus and Muslims, participating in rites in which each stepped beyond its 'natural' communal boundaries, one may see instead a single undifferentiated mass of Bengali villagers who, in their ongoing struggle with life's usual tribulations, unsystematically picked and chose from an array of reputed instruments—a holy man here, a holy river there—in order to tap superhuman power.[5]

[3] I am aware that there are other dimensions that need to be looked at, for example the relationship between Muslim women and Hindu men, and how inter-religious gender relationships were perceived by Muslims. While this can be the subject of a separate essay, my empirical evidence also suggests that in this period, especially from 1920s onwards, it was Hindus who used the woman's body in multiple and aggressive ways to sharpen communal boundaries. See P.K. Datta, '"Abductions" and the Constellation of a Hindu Communal Bloc in Bengal of the 1920s', *Studies in History* (hereafter *SIH*), Vol. 14(1), 1998, pp. 37–38; Charu Gupta, 'Articulating Hindu Masculinity and Femininity: *Shuddhi* and *Sangathan* Movements in United Provinces in the 1920s', *Economic and Political Weekly* (hereafter *EPW*), Vol. 33(13), 28 March 1998, pp. 727–35.

[4] Many studies of different regions have pointed this out. For Bengal, see Asim Roy, *The Islamic Syncretic Tradition in Bengal*, Princeton, 1983, pp. 207–48; Richard M. Eaton, *The Rise of Islam in the Bengal Frontier, 1204–1760*, Berkeley, 1993, pp. 269–315. For South India, see Susan Bayly, *Saints, Goddesses and Kings: Muslims and Christians in South Indian Society 1700–1900*, Cambridge, 1992, pp. 73–86, 115–50, 203–15; for Punjab, see Harjot Oberoi, *The Construction of Religious Boundaries: Culture, Identity and Diversity in the Sikh Tradition*, Delhi, 1994, pp. 130–203. Also see Richard M. Eaton, *Sufis of Bijapur 1300–1700: Social Roles of Sufis in Medieval India*, Princeton, 1978, pp. 89–105, 243–306; Aziz Ahmad, *Studies in Islamic Culture in the Indian Environment*, Oxford, 1964, pp. 157–66; Rasheeduddin Khan, ed., *Composite Culture of India and National Integration*, Simla, 1987, p. 36.

[5] Eaton, *The Rise of Islam*, p. 281.

Terms like 'syncretism' have often been used to describe this mixing. Some recent scholars have expressed reservations over the use of such terms as they already assume the existence of mutually exclusive entities and discrete traditions that are melded through cultural contact. Vijay Prashad argues that in Punjab, religion was not syncretic but historically diverse and popular.[6] Shail Mayaram prefers the term 'liminality' as according to her, it suggests a potentially anti-structural questioning of categorical identities and deliberately fuzzy boundaries.[7] More recently, Amiya Sen has drawn a distinction between conscious syncretism and occasional eclectic borrowing.[8]

Regarding the medieval period in India, it has been said that 'the composite culture in India originated in an environment of reconciliation, rather than refutation, cooperation rather than confrontation, coexistence rather than mutual annihilation of the politically dominant strands.'[9] Another scholar asserts that the dominant picture of the eighteenth century is not of Hindus and Muslims forming exclusive and antagonistic groups but of their co-operating in cultural life and social affairs.[10] Romila Thapar stresses that in the past what appears to have been absent was the notion of a uniform, religious community, readily identified as Hindu.[11] It has also been felt that pre-colonial society was too fragmented by sub-caste and local loyalties to have allowed larger religious allegiances to emerge.[12] Sudipta Kaviraj emphasises that the fuzziness of boundaries in the pre-colonial period arose largely because traditional communities, unlike modern ones, were not enumerated.[13] Some others who insist that supra-local religious identities did exist in pre-colonial India also acknowledge that they were most strongly developed among the privileged, largely to meet political ends at certain points of time, and that a much sharper articulation of these identities occurred only later.[14]

[6] Vijay Prashad, 'The Killing of Bala Shah and the Birth of Valmiki: Hinduisation and the Politics of Religion', *Indian Economic and Social History Review* (hereafter *IESHR*), Vol. 32(3), 1995, pp. 287–325.

[7] Shail Mayaram, *Resisting Regimes: Myth, Memory and the Shaping of a Muslim Identity*, Delhi, 1997, pp. 36–48.

[8] Amiya P. Sen, 'Bhakti Paradigms, Syncretism and Social Restructuring in *Kaliyuga*: A Reappraisal of Some Aspects of Bengali Religious Culture', *SIH*, Vol. 14(1), 1998, pp. 89–126.

[9] Rasheeduddin Khan, 'Composite Culture as a New National Identity', in Khan, *Composite Culture*, p. 36. Also see H.K. Sherwani, 'Cultural Synthesis in Medieval India', *Journal of Indian History* (hereafter *JIH*), Vol. 41, 1963, pp. 239–59.

[10] Mushirul Hasan, *Nationalism and Communal Politics in India, 1885–1991*, Delhi, 1991, pp. 4–5.

[11] Romila Thapar, 'Imagined Religious Communities? Ancient History and the Modern Search for a Hindu Identity', *Modern Asian Studies* (hereafter *MAS*), Vol. 23(2), 1989, pp. 209–30. Also see Vasudha Dalmia and Heinrich von Stietencron, 'Introduction', in *idem*, eds, *Representing Hinduism: The Construction of Religious Traditions and National Identity*, Delhi, 1995, pp. 17–32.

[12] Gyanendra Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India*, Delhi, 1990, p. 199.

[13] Sudipta Kaviraj, 'The Imaginary Institution of India', in Partha Chatterjee and Gyanendra Pandey, eds, *Subaltern Studies VII: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, Delhi, 1992, p. 26.

[14] Cynthia Talbot, 'Inscribing the Other, Inscribing the Self: Hindu–Muslim Identities in Pre-colonial India', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* (hereafter *CSSH*), Vol. 37(4), 1995, pp. 692–722.

It is beyond the scope of this essay to examine levels of interaction between Hindus and Muslims in pre-colonial, pre-modern UP. It has been argued that the structural and cultural ties uniting the Hindu and Muslim nobility became particularly strong in early nineteenth-century Awadh where both groups came to form a single socio-economic class. As a result, Hindu–Muslim amity and cultural interaction reached a sort of zenith. Elite Hindus mastered Persian, wore Mughal *sherwanis*, and worshipped at Shia shrines, while Muslim nobles celebrated the vernal Hindu festival of Holi and the Awadh *nawab* Wajid Ali Shah staged dance-dramas in which he himself played the role of Krishna. Particularly influential on musical culture was the spread of syncretic devotional forms of worship, especially those associated with Sufism and Vaishnava Bhakti in north India.[15] Due to pragmatic occupational needs, many of the Hindu clerical castes had mastered Indo-Persian revenue management.[16] In the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, many north-Indian Hindus employed Persianised Urdu as their literary medium.[17] Some lower-caste Hindu families followed Muslim practices of cross-cousin marriages and burial in the eighteenth century.[18] Further, seeing the explicit and minute list of instructions issued by Hindu publicists in the period of study, it is possible to infer that in practices of everyday life, in networks of employment, leisure, eating habits, daily economic needs and so on, elements of sharing between Hindus and Muslims were more widespread. There were commonly held practices, values and codes of behaviour, in spite of differences and boundaries. A large number of Muslim *mirasis, bhands* (entertainers) and prostitutes were often invited to perform at Hindu marriages and festivals.[19] Many bangle-sellers were Muslims, their customers often being Hindu women.[20] Dealings between Muslim weavers and Hindu merchants declined in the early twentieth century, as more Hindus became weavers and often started maintaining a segregated relationship.[21] At Banaras, Muslim *kunjras* (vegetable sellers) sold vegetables in the famous *sabzi* market at Chaukhamba in Gudaulia, but they were ousted in the 1920s–30s, and replaced by Hindu vegetable sellers.[22]

[15] Peter Manuel, 'Music, Media, and Communal Relations in North India, Past and Present', in David Ludden, ed., *Making India Hindu: Religion, Community and the Politics of Democracy in India*, Delhi, 1996, p. 122; Peter Manuel, *Thumri in Historical and Stylistic Perspectives*, Delhi, 1990, pp. 55–56. Richard B. Barnett, *North India Between Empires: Awadh, the Mughals, and the British 1720–1801*, Berkeley, 1980, p. 246 argues that the tolerance and the indifference to religious allegiance that characterised the middle *nawabi* of Awadh was a need of the times, as it was necessary to increase their legitimacy. This led to a more intense and visible cultural syncretism and eclecticism in the eighteenth century.

[16] C.A. Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars: North Indian Society in the Age of British Expansion, 1770–1870*, Cambridge, 1983, p. 30.

[17] Christopher R. King, *One Language, Two Scripts: The Hindi Movement in Nineteenth Century North India*, Bombay, 1994, pp. 24–25.

[18] Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen*, p. 49.

[19] Manuel, 'Music, Media', p. 122.

[20] Hanuman Pd. Poddar, *Samaj Sudhar*, Gorakhpur, 1929, pp. 24–25.

[21] Nita Kumar, *The Artisans of Banaras: Popular Culture and Identity*, Princeton, 1988, p. 51.

[22] Interview with Dr Anand Krishna, 73 years, Banaras, 18 February 1998.

As we will see later, a substantial number of Hindus, especially lower castes and women, participated in *tazia* worship, Muharram celebrations and visits to *pirs*. At the same time, there were various restrictions and divisions relating to commensal, food, purity-pollution, contractual and connubial practices. However, in most cases Muslims were treated at par with the untouchables by most caste Hindus.[23] Thus, ritual exclusions and commensal restrictions were not invested with notions of a boundary between religious communities.

It is entirely possible that people shared beliefs and practices and interacted in a plural culture, but without effacing all differences of perspective, label and custom. Moreover, sectarian divisions were not produced only with the coming of the British. Although Hindu and Muslim identities were not fixed or continuous over time, neither were they absent in pre-colonial times. Rather they were intermittent, occasionally flowering rather than in full bloom. Muzaffar Alam argues that in the medieval period, Hindus and Muslims shared activities in the public realm, even though they were segregated in the private realm.[24] There were certain changes which fractured this sharing, even though it had its earlier limits, in the late nineteenth and more so in the early twentieth century, as growing conflict between Hindus and Muslims became entrenched and institutionalised. Cultures are never homogeneous, but where there had once been recognisable Muslims and Hindus, rather than categories that encompassed *all* 'Hindus' and 'Muslims' *by definition,* now sharper and broader religious communities were being constructed.

When looking at syncretic cultures and cleavages within them, most studies have tended to emphasise religious, ritual and/or festive practices. They have marginalised various other facets of 'everyday life'—the economic, material and social dynamics of this interaction—which were equally crucial elements of these shared spaces. Combined with popular beliefs, the needs of daily life had their own internal logic, which created such interactive domains. Michel de Certeau highlights the importance of everyday life and practices, like reading, talking, walking, dwelling and cooking, which should not be treated merely as an obscure background of social activity.[25] Alf Ludtke, while delineating the history of everyday life, stresses the importance of investigating the material circumstances of daily existence at work, at home and at play, and exploring social history in its experimental and subjective dimensions.[26] Agnes Heller argues that on the plane of the person, our everyday life depicts the reproduction of a current society in general; it depicts the socialisation of nature and the degree and manner of its

[23] Shiva S. Dua, *Society and Culture in Northern India 1850–1900*, Delhi, 1985, pp. 63–74.

[24] Muzaffar Alam, 'Competition and Co-existence: Indo-Islamic Interaction in Medieval North India', *Itinerario*, Vol. 13(1), 1989, pp. 46–55; Sudhir Kakar, *The Colors of Violence: Cultural Identities, Religion and Conflict*, Chicago, 1996, pp. 16–24.

[25] Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Steven F. Rendall, tr., Berkeley, 1984, pp. xi–xxiv.

[26] Alf Ludtke, ed., *The History of Everyday Life: Reconstructing Historical Experiences and Ways of Life*, William Templer, tr., Princeton, 1995, pp. 4–30.

humanisation.[27] Further, larger public arenas tend to be more impersonal or notional, while the everyday is more personal and interactive, and therefore, possibly, more pervasive. Larger collectivities are also easier to disparage and protest against because of their visibility, while daily individual interaction is more hidden and muted, and thus more difficult to control. This essay thus extends the realm of 'syncretic culture' in everyday life, to include both socio-economic and ritual, individual and collective, private and public, and mundane and profane spaces.

The realm of the everyday was also crucial from a gendered perspective, as it was an arena where women were unbiquitous and often played a central role.[28] To engage with this history of everyday life as a history of gender is to inquire into the meanings of sexual affiliations, and of the repeated exchanges with the opposite sex of various castes, classes and communities.

I

There were certain developments and changes in the internal dynamics of UP in the late nineteenth and more so in the early twentieth centuries which fractured these shared social, religious and material arenas. The British played a part in this, in terms of colonial urban morphology, municipal laws, orientalising perceptions, missionary activities and the decennial census.[29] Equally important were the tensions within the Hindu community and specific changes that occurred at this time. A context for Hindu revival was the emergence of a vital Hindu mercantile culture in north India in the early nineteenth century.[30] After 1857, not only was there a rapid expansion of railway networks, sea transport and telegraphic communications, but also a sharp increase in new professions, law courts, the number of lawyers, schools and colleges, public bodies and libraries, publishing houses, press and vernacular newspapers in the Gangetic plains.[31] The Hindu middle classes, though influenced by the lifestyles of the West, also resisted them, and sought an independent collective identity: temples mushroomed, novel processions appeared on the streets and the cow attained a new prominence as a focus of the Hindu community.[32] Vasudha Dalmia and William Pinch have emphasised how Vaishnava reforms took new contours and shapes in this period, stressing higher caste status for many lower castes, and evolving a more aggressive Hinduism.[33] There was a

[27] Agnes Heller, *Everyday Life*, G.L. Campbell, tr., London, 1984, p. 4.

[28] Dorothee Wierling, 'The History of Everyday Life and Gender Relations: On Historical and Historiographical Relationships', in Ludtke, *History of Everyday Life*, pp. 149–68.

[29] Thapar, 'Imagined Religious Communities?', p. 218.

[30] Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen*, pp. 180–81, 386–93.

[31] C.A. Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence gathering and social communication in India, 1780–1870*, Cambridge, 1996, p. 338; Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen*, pp. 427–30.

[32] Katherine Prior, 'Making History: The State's Intervention in Urban, Religious Disputes in the North Western Provinces in the Early Nineteenth Century', *MAS*, Vol. 27(1), 1993, p. 179.

[33] Vasudha Dalmia, *Nationalization of Hindu Traditions*, Delhi, 1996; William Pinch, *Peasants and Monks in British India*, Delhi, 1996.

proliferation of religious rituals and celebrations and the activities of the Arya Samaj, Sanatan Dharma Mahamandal and the Hindu Sabha expanded considerably.[34] Christophe Jaffrelot has stressed that Hindu nationalism was constructed as an ideology between the 1870s and the 1920s, and in the 1920s the doctrine was crystallised.[35]

At the same time, there were several conflicts and divisions centred around caste, function, occupation, and the like. But through the Hindu woman, the Hindu middle classes, which included a large number of intermediate castes, found certain bonds of common interests and values, which, to an extent, transcended these divisions. Partha Chatterjee has pointed out that at this time a cohesion around issues of women was possible as the Hindu woman came to be seen as the harbinger of the spiritual essence of the home, an arena where it was possible for the Hindu male to impose order and control.[36] Tanika Sarkar highlights that gender and community politics enmeshed with each other, where the discursive management of female bodies was essential to project a civilised and vibrant sectarian Hindu identity and a new nation. Patriarchal formation thus acquired new meanings, through new models of chastity and of the *pativrata* wife.[37] At the same time, women had a more ambivalent relationship with class, caste and community identities, as they had a lesser stake in such assertions. The Hindu publicists struck at this weakest link to argue for community homogeneity. Control over the social, religious, material and public arena of Hindu women provided a link between the Hindu service communities (particularly Kayasthas and Khattris) who were strong in the Samaj, the ubiquitous communities of local Brahmins and merchants (especially Marwaris) who tended towards a more orthodox form of revivalism, and various intermediate and Shudra caste associations and organisations (principally Ahirs, Kurmis, Gujars and Khatiks) who were engaged in assertions of a higher Kshatriya status for themselves. Among lower castes, women were also subject to control because of their economic roles, as they participated in providing income to the household. Thus, for different reasons and perceptions, they could all come together on the issue of *their* women.

There were also growing economic insecurities among the Hindus as the colonial onslaught posed a serious challenge to many of the traditional occupations, and dislocated existing social and economic relations. For example, the working

[34] S.B. Freitag, *Collective Action and Community: Public Arenas and the Emergence of Communalism in North India*, Berkley, 1989.

[35] Christophe Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement and Indian Politics: 1925 to the 1990s*, Delhi, 1996, pp. 11–79.

[36] Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Post Colonial Histories*, Delhi, 1994, pp. 116–26.

[37] Tanika Sarkar, 'The Hindu Wife and the Hindu Nation: Domesticity and Nationalism in Nineteenth Century Bengal', *SIH*, Vol. 8(2), 1992, pp. 213–35.

[38] For example, fines were to be imposed on sweepers if it was felt that s/he was not performing the duty in a proper way and at reasonable intervals. Bathing and washing were restricted to certain times and places. Licences were necessary for manufacture and sale of any articles of food or drink: cf., *The*

of the 1900 Municipalities Act in UP reveals the intervention of colonial authorities in almost all occupations and customary rights of various classes, at least at the level of regulations.[38] However, the actual implementation of these acts was largely in Indian hands, which increased the potential for tyrannies and rivalries between middle-class Hindus and Muslims. Various facets of everyday existence—what food to sell and where to sell it; where, when and how to bathe, wash and reside; issues regarding vehicles, streets, lights, drains, filth, prostitutes, noise, scavenging, and the like—became contentious. At the same time, in UP towns, Muslims were relatively advanced in literacy and employment,[39] which led to a feeling among many Hindus that Muslims were usurping *their* jobs. From the early twentieth century, there was a substantial increase in the population of UP and consequently the pressure on jobs and employment intensified. A large number of lower-caste Hindus were forced to migrate to urban centres.[40] There was increasing competition for menial jobs, and also for higher economic and political positions in municipal boards.[41] By 1935, the problem of unemployment had become extremely acute in UP.[42] Through the figure of the Hindu woman, certain menial jobs and professions in which Muslims were employed were specially attacked. By asking her to keep away from Muslim menials, an opportunity was created for Hindu males to venture into those occupations instead. Thus, in the realm of the everyday, Muslims were often seen as bigger threats than the British. Many of the lower and intermediate Hindu castes were feeling the anxiety of extreme economic insecurity, and taking an oppositional discourse against the Muslims was therefore seen as economically advantageous.

Simultaneously, there were changes in the position of women, families and households, which increased patriarchal insecurities at this time and made control over women more urgent. The beginning of the Non-Co-operation/Khilafat movement saw a remarkable increase in the participation of Hindu women in 'public' activities and on the streets. A pulsating atmosphere of activity and growing awareness of women's roles and rights was building up in UP during this period.[43] Besides

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North West Provinces and Oudh Municipalities Act, 1990, Allahabad, 1901, pp. 37–38, 42, 49–50, 62. It has been argued that the imposition of order by the appropriation and control of space was central to colonial authority as it existed in UP. See Veena Talwar Oldenburg, *The Making of Colonial Lucknow: 1856–1877*, Princeton, 1984.

[39] E.A.H. Blunt, *Census of India, 1911, Vol. XV, United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, Part I: Report*, Allahabad, 1912, p. 27; A.C. Turner, *Census of India, 1931, Vol. XVIII, United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, Part I: Report*, Allahabad, 1933, p. 137; Raghuraj Gupta, *Hindu–Muslim Relations*, Lucknow, 1976, pp. 24–29; Gopinath Srivastava, *When Congress Ruled*, Lucknow, n.d., pp. 101–3.

[40] Nandini Gooptu, 'The Urban Poor and Militant Hinduism in Early Twentieth-Century Uttar Pradesh', *MAS*, Vol. 31(4), 1997, pp. 881–87; Pandey, *Construction*, pp. 78–79.

[41] Francis Robinson, 'Municipal Government and Muslim Separatism in the United Provinces, 1883 to 1916', *MAS*, Vol. 7(3), 1973, pp. 389–441.

[42] *Report of the Unemployment Committee, United Provinces*, 1935, Allahabad, 1936, p. 27.

[43] There are a large number of studies which provide insights into this change in UP, and not merely at the level of participation. See Uma Rao and Meera Devi, 'Glimpses: UP Women's Response to Gandhi', *Samya Shakti*, Vol. 1(2), 1984, pp. 21–32; Poonam Saxena, 'Women's

the urban participation of women, the Avadh Kisan Movement led by Baba Ramchandra also saw rural women coming out.[44] The customary demarcation of gendered spaces became more and more untenable. Hindu publicists had to increasingly come to terms with these developments and negotiate with them to their advantage; instructing women to break away from 'everything' Muslim proved a potent weapon in their hands.

The Hindu publicists, particularly prominent members of the Arya Samaj, had realised the importance of direct intervention in public communication systems, and controlled many of the important publishing houses and newspapers being published from UP in the early twentieth century. At this time, the number of newspapers and publications in Hindi far exceeded those in Urdu.[45] Further, many of the leading lights of the Hindu Mahasabha were lawyers.[46] The control over many newspapers and legal practices paid rich dividends to the Hindu publicists at this time, and they became more and more communal in tone. During the 1920s, the campaign for unifying the Hindus gained a new urgency in the region, and became more aggressive, militant and influential.[47] There was a spate of Hindu–

Participation in the National Movement in the United Provinces', *Manushi*, 46, 1988, pp. 2–10. Hindi women's journals like *Grihalakshmi*, *Stree Darpan*, *Prabha* and *Chand* supported the women's increasing presence in public spheres; Vir Bharat Talwar, 'Feminist Consciousness in Women's Journals in Hindi: 1910–20', in Kumkum Sangari and Sudesh Vaid, eds, *Recasting Women: Essays in Colonial History*, Delhi, 1989, pp. 204–32.

[44] Kapil Kumar, 'Rural Women in Oudh 1917–1947: Baba Ramchandra and the Women's Question', in Sangari and Vaid, *Recasting Women*, pp. 337–40; Deepti Priya Mehrotra, 'Women's Participation in Peasant Movements: UP 1917–47', unpublished M.Phil dissertation, Department of Political Science, University of Delhi, 1986.

[45] Brahmanand, *Bhartiya Swatantrata Andolan aur Uttar Pradesh ki Hindi Patrakarita*, Delhi, 1986, p. 256; Interview with Kshem Chandra Sumen by Dr Hari Dev Sharma, 17 September 1971, *Oral History Transcript No. 210*, Nehru Memorial Museum Library, New Delhi (hereafter NMML), pp. 12–15; *Administration Report, UP, 1923–24*, Allahabad, 1924, p. 91. This was also a reflection of the victory of Hindi in the Hindi–Urdu controversy: cf., King, *One Language, Two Scripts*.

[46] *Sri Bharat Mahamandal Directory*, Banaras, 1930; Richard Gordon, 'The Hindu Mahasabha and the Indian National Congress, 1915 to 1926', *MAS*, Vol. 9(2), 1975, p. 153.

[47] There had been various earlier attempts at unifying the Hindu community in the late nineteenth century by the Arya Samaj, Hindu Samaj of Allahabad, Sanatana Dharma Mahamandal and Sanatan Dharma Sabha. People like Bharatendu Harishchandra and Madan Mohan Malaviya had declared the need to rejuvenate Hinduism: C.A. Bayly, *Local Roots of Indian Politics: Allahabad 1880–1920*, Oxford, 1975, pp. 104–17, 214–17; Freitag, *Collective Action*, pp. 208–9. But at this time they became much more strident. There were various reasons for this. The wider context was partly the recognition of communal representation in the political and constitutional reforms introduced by the British after World War I. More important, the Hindu publicists saw in the Khilafat movement and the Moplah revolts the threat of a thoroughly united, well organised and militant Muslim population, poised to wipe out the Hindus and their culture. To add to this, a section of the Congress leadership in UP, led by Madan Mohan Malaviya, and actively supported by Swami Shraddhanand, adopted a Hindu rhetoric in the 1920s to oppose the growing power of the Swarajists: Gordan, 'Hindu Mahasabha', pp. 145–203; Gyanendra Pandey, 'Hindus and Others: The Militant Hindu Construction', *EPW*, Vol. 26(52), 28 December 1991, p. 2998; T.C.A. Raghavan, 'Origins and Development of Hindu Mahasabha Ideology: The Call of V.D. Savarkar and Bhai Parmanand', *EPW*, Vol. 18(5), 9 April 1983, pp. 595–99.

Muslim riots from 1923 onwards. According to British commentators, compared to any other province in India, UP witnessed the greatest number of riots in this period.[48] Conversions were challenged in an organised manner, and as part of their community- and nation-making discourse, the Arya Samaj and the Hindu Mahasabha launched the programme of *shuddhi* (reconversion from Islam to Hinduism and reclamation of lower castes into the Hindu caste hierarchy) and *sangathan* (community defence) on a large scale.[49] Both of these implied a strictly regulated code of conduct for women. A phenomenal number of tracts and books attacking Muslims came out in UP, many of which had clearly gendered connotations.[50] In the same period, many stories were circulated by a large section of Hindu communalists about abductions and conversions of Hindu women by Muslim *goondas*, which became significant for the mobilisation of Hindus.[51] The propaganda campaign against 'abductions', which were often imagined, illustrated the remarkable aptitude shown by the Hindu communalists in a range of media to propagate the image of the sexually charged, lustful Muslim male, violating the pure body of the Hindu woman.[52] The campaign against Muslims left its bitter legacies, since sections of them too became more aggressive and launched *tanzim* (call for Muslim organisation, to promote education and unity among Muslims) and *tabligh* (a movement seeking conversion to Islam), which further aggravated the situation.[53]

[48] *Home Poll.*, File No. 4/1927, National Archives of India, New Delhi (hereafter NAI).

[49] Pandey, *Construction*, pp. 233–35; Freitag, *Collective Action*, pp. 220–48.

[50] I have come across innumerable tracts of this kind: Shivsharmaji Updeshak (Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, UP), *Musalmani Ki Zindagani*, Moradabad, 1924; Mahatma Premanand (Hindu Dharma Rakshak), *Musalmani Andher Khaata*, Awadh, 1928; Adarsh Pustak Bhandar, pub., *Quran Ki Khuni Ayaten*, Banaras, 1927; Pt Lekramji, *Jihad, Quran va Islami Khunkhari*, Etawah, 1924; Premsaranji (Arya Pracharak), *Devadut Darpan*, Agra, 1926. Also see *Police Deptt*, File No. 363/1924, 'Possibility of Dealing with literature that provokes ill-feelings between different communities', UP State Archives, Lucknow (hereafter UPSA).

[51] The Moplah rebellion especially brought an urgency to the campaign, as stories of forcible conversions, rape and abduction of Hindu women were floated. Gail Minault, *The Khilafat Movement: Religious Symbolism and Political Mobilisation in India*, Delhi, 1982, p. 167; Sitaram Chaturvedi, *Madan Mohan Malaviya*, Delhi, 1972, p. 42; Bhai Parmanand, *Hindu Sangathan*, Lahore, 1936, p. 151; *Home Poll.*, File No. 156/II/1924, NAI, p. 4.

[52] Gupta, 'Articulating Hindu Masculinity', pp. 727–35. The campaign penetrated other regions as well: cf., Datta, '"Abductions" and the Constellation of a Hindu Communal Bloc', pp. 37–88; P.K. Datta, '"Dying Hindus": Production of Hindu Communal Common Sense in Early 20th Century Bengal', *EPW*, Vol. 28(44), 19 June 1993, pp. 1305–19; Papiya Ghosh, 'The Virile and the Chaste in Community and Nation Making: Bihar 1920's to 1940's', *Social Scientist*, Vol. 22(1–2), January–February 1994, pp. 80–94.

[53] For such accounts see Y.B. Mathur, *Growth of Muslim Politics in India*, Delhi, 1979; Gyanendra Pandey, *Ascendancy of the Congress in UP 1926–34: A Study in Imperfect Mobilisation*, Delhi, 1978, pp. 115–17. Also see Francis Robinson, *Separatism among Indian Muslims: The Politics of the United Provinces Muslims 1860–1923*, Delhi, 1994.

An obsession with numbers added a further dimension to militant Hindu articulations.[54] The numerically defined strength of the community became a significant component of the communal consciousness, and helped in stabilising Hindu identities around new orientations.[55] Every Hindu woman including widows, came to be seen as a potential womb, capable of producing strong Hindu progeny. This concern with numbers therefore increased pressures for controls over the sexuality and reproductive capacity of Hindu women.[56] Thus, in this particular period of heightened communalism, the Hindu publicists were able to use the woman's body as a key element in communal discourse. Against this background, the following section focuses on the fractures in shared cultural and religious spaces.

II

The discourse of the Hindu publicists attempted to outlaw all spheres of Hindu–Muslim interaction. An attempt was made to further extend occupational divisions and identities more sharply along religious affiliations, the lines being drawn between Muslim and Hindu prostitutes, weavers and vegetable sellers. As early as 1890, Hindus held a large meeting at Aligarh in which Hindus were instructed not to buy anything from a Muslim or to engage his services. This, in turn, had an adverse effect on Muslims who were forced to submit a petition to the government which stated:

> Prostitutes, players on native drums and buffoons, *bhagtiyas* (dancing boys) have all been Musalman for centuries and have all along been serving in their respective capacities, all the baniyahs, kayasths, Brahmans . . . and the British Government might as well ascertain for itself whether all these professional persons have been any other than Musalmans . . . . The Government can now form an idea of what a large number of men have been deprived of their means of livelihood on account of the Dharm Samaj Hindus having boycotted them.[57]

[54] It has been argued that census became a decennial tally-sheet which registered the progress and decline of each religious community and helped to change the very concept of 'Hindu' from a notion of a religion to that of a community: K.W. Jones. 'Religious Identity and Indian Census', in N.G. Barrier, ed., *The Census of British India: New Perspectives*, Delhi, 1980. The alleged decline in the number of Hindus was constantly lamented: Babu Bhagwandass, *Hinduon ka Sangranthan aur Atmarakshan*, Kashi, 1922; Chandrikaprasad, *Hinduon ke Saath Vishwaasghat*, Awadh, 1917, p. 14.

[55] Bhai Parmanand, *Hindu Jati ka Rahasya*, Lucknow, 1928, p. 90. He stated that the main reason for Hindu–Muslim conflict was the question of numbers, where Muslims were constantly increasing and Hindus decreasing. In such a situation the main aim of the *sangathan* was to stop the decline of Hindu numbers.

[56] Gupta, 'Articulating Hindu Masculinity', pp. 732–33.

[57] *General Deptt*, Police B, File No. 54B/1891, UPSA.

Again, for example in 1911, leading Hindus of Hardwar decided to boycott Muslim vegetable- and shoe-sellers, and bamboo-basket makers, and also not to rent their shops and houses to Muslims.[58] Suggestions and advice for discipline and a code of conduct for Hindus in their dealings with Muslims became more detailed and specific with time, especially in the 1920s. Such tracts abounded, and the agenda of Hindu religious identity and consciousness was broadened to include a variety of things. One title that proved to be extremely popular for many such tracts was *Alarm Bell*, with slight modifications. Most of the versions were written by prominent members of the Arya Samaj in UP, who were often shopkeepers, traders, lawyers or teachers.[59] There were endless lists of suggestions to Hindus to have no dealings with Muslim tailors, milkmen, vegetable-sellers, bangle-sellers, policemen, *bhands*, prostitutes, washermen, *nais* (barbers), *ekkawallahs* (coachmen) and butchers.[60] Numerous meetings were held and notices issued to that effect.[61] On 12 and 13 January 1911, several small meetings of Hindus organised by the Arya Samaj were held at Agra, and it was decided that neither Muslim dancing girls nor musicians would be employed in marriage celebrations. On 18 and 19 January, there were some 30 Hindu marriage processions at Agra, and not a single Muslim dancing girl or bandsman was employed except in one instance.[62]

[58] *General Adm. Deptt*, File No. 399/1911, UPSA.

[59] Hindu Sabha, pub., *Alarm Bell Urf Khatre ki Ghanti*, Banaras, 1925; Pt Shiv Sharma Updeshak, *Alarm Bigule*, Moradabad, 1924; Mathura Prasad Shiv Hare, *Alarm Bell Arthat Khatre ka Ghanta*, Haridwar, 1924; Shraddhanand Sanyasi, *Khatre ka Ghanta Arthat Muhammadi Shadyantra ka Rahasyabheda*, Delhi, 1923. It was noted that several copies of *Alarm Bell*, written by one Ramanand had appeared in Etah in May 1926: *Secret Police Abstracts of Intelligence of United Provinces* (henceforth *PAI*), Criminal Investigation Department Office, Lucknow, 15 May 1926, No. 18, Para 473, p. 261. Even notices and posters of it appeared. A *vakil* distributed notices at Mathura in 1925, with references to *Alarm Bell*, *PAI*, 27 June 1925, No. 24, Para 195, p. 255. Posters entitled *Alarm Bell* were posted in Banaras in 1926: *PAI*, 8 May 1926, No. 17, Para 435, p. 248. Many of these ostensibly claimed that they had been written in response to Khwaja Hasan Nizami's *Daiye Islam*. However, in the process they went far beyond their claims and used it as an effective pretext to propagate militant Hinduism and aggressively assert a community identity.

[60] Updeshak, *Alarm Bigule*, p. 31; Hare, *Alarm Bell*, pp. 4–41; Sabha, *Alarm Bell*, pp. 15–20.

[61] At the District Hindu Conference at Dehradun on 4 March 1924, Dr Kedar Nath, a prominent member of UP Arya Samaj advocated the boycott of all Muslims, and was supported by Swami Vicharanand: *PAI*, 22 March 1924, No. 12, Para 102, p. 111; at a Naga Kirtan meeting in Gorakhpur on 14 November 1925, attended by some 1,000 people, it was advised to Hindus to boycott all Muslim shops: *ibid.*, 28 November 1925, No. 45, Para 400, p. 495; in June 1926, the *Yatri Sabha* at Haridwar prevented Hindu pilgrims from engaging tongas driven by Muslims: *ibid.*, 12 June 1926, No. 22, Para 553, p. 320. Posters were distributed at Badaun in 1926 by *Dharam Rakshini Sabha*, advising Hindus to abstain from social intercourse with Muslims: *ibid.*, 18 September 1926, No. 36, Para 838, p. 508; Notices were issued at Etawah warning Hindus against attending cinemas and theatrical performances in the district exhibition as they were run by Muslims: *ibid.*, 3 December 1927, No. 46, Para 1138, p. 454. Also see *ibid.*, 12 February 1927, No. 6, Para 135, p. 51; 22 September 1928. No. 37, Para 771, p. 391; 22 September 1928. No. 37, Para 771, p. 391.

[62] *Home Poll*, File No. 1–4/March 1911/B, 'Weekly Reports of the Director, Criminal Intelligence, on the Political Situation in UP during the Month of February 1911', NAI.

These campaigns thus seemed to have had an adverse impact on occupations traditionally and largely dominated by Muslims.

A linked aspect of these suggestions, the other face of the coin, was to employ the services of only a Hindu *dhunia* (cotton-carder), *kori* (weaver), *chikwa* (butcher) and *churihaar* (bangle-seller).[63] At a private meeting of Hindus held in the Panchayati dharamshala at Roorkee, it was resolved that Muslims should be replaced in the menial trades by Hindus, and that Hindu masters should get rid of their Muslim servants.[64] In 1925, in a town in UP, Hindus were boycotting Muslim drummers and training Chamars to replace them.[65] In Allahabad, *khatiks* were employed to sell vegetables in place of Muslim *kunjras*.[66] These were various artisanal groups in which, as Gyanendra Pandey and Nita Kumar have both shown, Muslims were often in a majority.[67] A Barah Sabha was formed in UP, the purpose of which was to protect and increase the number of Hindus in jobs and occupations. Its explicit aim was to encourage Hindus to take up those trades, jobs, occupations, professions and enterprises with which they had traditionally not been associated.[68] Thus, negative appeals were followed by positive suggestions to open up new arenas for Hindu males, to create more jobs for them, to diversify occupations into hitherto unexplored areas, and to reduce the insecurity of unemployment and poverty faced by the Hindu poor.[69] Class, caste, occupation and community were woven together to demarcate the Muslims and to promote the material advancement of the Hindus. In the process, any shared economic arenas of interdependence were challenged.

Sometimes lower castes also reiterated such recommendations for their own specific reasons. Charmars for example, had a special place in the economic hierarchy of UP. A large number of them were tenants and had considerable interaction with the poor Muslims. On the one hand, they asserted their separate status by differentiating themselves from both lower-caste and high-caste Hindus, and on the other, they were swayed by upward mobility within Hinduism. Thus, it was their own internal dynamics and economic and social aspirations that at times led

[63] Mahatma Premanand Baanprasthi, *Ghazi Kaun Hai*, Allahabad, 1927, p. 7. Hindus were asked to urgently adopt those professions that were exclusively in the hands of Muslims: *Arya Patra*, week ending 25 August 1923, *Native Newspaper Reports of UP* (hereafter *NNR*), p. 2. Hindus were exhorted to organise their own bands, for safety of marriage processions: *Vartman*, week ending 8 May 1926, *NNR*.

[64] *PAI*, 24 May 1924, No. 20, Para 168, p. 174.

[65] *Home Poll*, File No. 25/1925, 'Fortnightly Report of UP for the Second Half of July 1925', NAI.

[66] *PAI*, 6 April 1938, No. 14, Para 162, p. 91.

[67] Pandey, *Construction*, p. 56; Kumar, *Artisans of Banaras*, pp. 49–50.

[68] Advertisement of aims and objectives of Barah Sabha, published in Anon. (Hindu Dharm Rakhsak), *Musalmani Andher Khaata*, Awadh 1924, inside front cover.

[69] It has been stated that as the labour market in UP was becoming more and more crowded, the shudra poor in the towns faced growing occupational conflict with other groups of the poor, in addition to the increasing economic insecurity and marginalisation, Gooptu, 'Urban Poor', p. 888.

them to call for a boycott of Muslims.[70] A Chamar conference held at Meerut in 1922 and attended by 4,000 Chamars passed a resolution not to take food except from Hindus.[71] Similar resolutions were passed at meetings of Chamars at Mathura, Jaunpur and Dehradun.[72] In a pamphlet of the Ahirs it was mentioned that Muslim masons and bricklayers were increasing in numbers and posing a threat to those Ahirs who worked in the construction industry.[73]

Deviations from the norms created by Hindu publicists were condemned. Voices recommending co-operation and working together in everyday life were suppressed, revealing a self-regulating society. At Colonelganj in Gonda, when a boycott of Muslims by Hindus was reported, certain Hindus who did not fall in line were themselves boycotted and threatened.[74] At Azamgarh, two Ahirs were fined for selling their cattle to Muslims in contravention of the orders of the panchayat.[75]

The usual suggestions given to Hindus were more specifically aimed at Hindu women, because of the particular relationship of women with the everyday arena under scrutiny, and a growing fear that they were deciding many aspects of their lives on their own. Exchanges with servants, sweepers, bangle-sellers and vegetable-sellers while bargaining for commodities of everyday use was a domain in which women played an important role, expressing as it did, their daily material and social life. Now, more than ever before, this day-to-day relation of women with those with whom they interacted inside, as well as outside their home, their forms of entertainment, their cultural life, and religious feelings, their interaction with people from whom they bought their objects of daily consumption and in fact their every living moment came under the scrutiny of Hindu publicists.

The paradigm of the potential threat of violation due to the entry of the outsider into the realm of the Hindu household saw a crucial shift, especially in the early twentieth century—Muslims to a large extent replaced the Christian missionaries in the Hindu propaganda machinery. In the late nineteenth century, for example, the Hindu reformers were very critical of the entry of missionary women in the house through their *zenana* missions, and of Christian proselytising under the garb

[70] The relationship between lower castes and Hindu reformists was tense and complex in UP. However, it has been argued that especially from the 1920s onwards, Hindu organisations felt that they must reclaim the untouchables for Hinduism, and wean them away from all ostensible 'Muslim' practices and rituals. The lower castes in turn absorbed, accepted, appropriated, contested and reconstructed these concepts from different perspectives and reasons. See Prashad, 'The Killing of Bala Shah', pp. 287–325; Gooptu, 'The Urban Poor', pp. 879–918; Sumit Sarkar, *Writing Social History*, Delhi, 1997, pp. 358–90.

[71] *PAI*, 4 November 1922, No. 42, Para 1269, p. 1577.

[72] *Ibid.*, 17 March 1923, No. 8, Para 170, p. 124; 9 October 1926, No. 39, Para 904, p. 544; 12 March 1927, No. 10, Para 225, p. 92.

[73] Baijnathprasad Yadav, *Ahir Jati Ki Nyamvali*, Banaras, 1927, p. 39; also mentioned in Gooptu, 'The Urban Poor', p. 888.

[74] *PAI*, 5 April 1924, No. 14, Para 116, p. 128.

[75] *Ibid.*, 6 May 1933, No. 17, Para 296, p. 234.

of education.[76] However, by the 1920s, Muslim men came to be seen as the main threat to the chastity of Hindu women. Newspapers and pamphlets cautioned Hindus not to allow their women and children to have any dealings with Muslim traders, teachers and servants.[77] They were warned not to let their women talk to Muslim vegetable-sellers, shopkeepers and sweepers, and not to send children to Muslim *madarsas*.[78] Places of work allowed the possibility of greater sexual mixing between women and men of various castes and religions. Thus, lower-caste Hindu males were told not to allow their women to work in Muslim households, factories or shops. Every Hindu Sabha was asked to keep a detailed list of all jobs held by Muslims in which they came in contact with Hindu women.[79]

Implicit here was also the fear of Hindu women losing control of their sexuality and falling prey to Muslim male desires. An economic and social boycott was intended to facilitate the isolation of Hindu women from all Muslims and to reduce the anxieties of Hindu patriarchy. Thus, Hindu women's lives, experiences and identities were brought into a realm of instruction. A whole new language was employed for them vis-à-vis Muslims, telling them how to move and how not to, whom to talk to and whom not to talk to, where to go and where not to go, what to do and what not to do. All places of possible contact between Hindu women and Muslim men, public and private, came within this ambit. But in the process of regulating their lives, cracks appeared in more and more shared spaces. It seemed that women themselves had been guilty of participating in such arenas, and so it was through women that the intended separation could now be achieved. This was publicised through *Stri Siksha* (women's education), an Arya Samajist tract on 'proper' behaviour for Hindu women in order to avoid contact with Muslims, written by a prominent pandit of the UP Arya Pratinidhi Sabha:[80]

> (1) Do not ever worship any grave. (2) Do not worship *tazias*, Muslim Gods and jesters. (3) Do not get amulets, charms or incantations done from Muslims. (4) Do not go to Muslim priests who read prayers in mosques. (5) At marriages

[76] Annie Besant, *The Education of Indian Girls*, Banaras/London, 1904, p. 1; Iswar Saran, 'The Education of Our Women—A Great Social Problem', *The Kayastha Samachar*, Vol. 4(6), December 1901, p. 490; *Bharat Jivan*, 11 April, 1892, p. 4; *Prayag Samachar*, 14 April 1898, *NNR* (recd up to 27 April 1898), p. 228.

[77] *Arya Patra*, week ending 12 July 1924, *NNR*, p. 2; Pt Brij Mohan Jha, *Hinduon Jaago*, Etawah, n.d., pp. 12–15. Similar demands were made in other regions as well. See *B.S. Moonje Papers*, File No. 42/1935, NMML. As we have seen, many newspapers were controlled by sympathisers of the Hindu Mahasabha and members of the Arya Samaj.

[78] Baanprasthi, *Ghazi Kaun Hai*, p. 5.

[79] Hare, *Alarm Bell*, p. 50.

[80] Shiv Sharmaji Mahopdeshak, *Stri Siksha*, Bareilly, 1927. The tract was later proscribed, NAI, 1121 H. Also mentioned in Graham Shaw and Mary Lloyd, eds, *Publications Proscribed by the Government of India: A Catalogue of the Collections in the India Office Library and Records and The Department of Oriental Manuscripts and Printed Books, British Library Reference Division*, London, 1985.

> and other times, do not do any embroidery of Muslim kind. (6) Do not get assessments and measurements done from Muslims. (7) Do not listen to invocations of *pirs*. (8) Stop taking out money in the name of *pirs* . . . . (10) Never ever visit Muslim fairs. (11) Never sit alone on any Muslim's vehicle. (12) Never have your children taught by Muslims. (13) Do not let your children sit with Muslims alone. (14) Do not buy toys and fruits from Muslim hands for your children. (15) Do not buy or wear bangles from the hands of Muslim bangle-sellers. (16) Do not buy any household item from Muslim homes or shops. (17) Do not go to deserted places . . . . (19) Do not walk in front of Muslim rulers and magistrates . . . . (24) Leave your home with a sharp dagger . . . . (29) Do not give any alms to Muslim beggars. Never come without *purdah* in front of a Muslim servant and never cross him . . . .
>
> If a woman is lost: . . . Women often get lost at stations, fairs . . . . Do not be afraid . . . . Directly reach *sewa samiti*, Hindu Sabha or Arya Samaj. Never go to a Khilafat person. Never trust a Muslim policeman. But definitely and without any fear take the help of an English white policeman or officer . . . . You can even take the help of a Hindu porter . . . . Stay firm on your Hindu *dharma* . . . . Encourage and let your husband and sons join Hindu Sabha, Arya Samaj and *shuddhi* sabha.[81]

These detailed and minute instructions affirmed the agenda of religious and community distinctiveness by means of social and economic separation. At the same time the image of the Muslim became more menacing, and far more dangerous than that of the British.

Commands were endorsed through other sources. To take the case of Muslim *manihars* (bangle-sellers) at Bareilly, in 1893 itself they were prohibited from calling upon Hindu women at their homes for supplying bangles.[82] A caste tract, asking for social reforms among the Aggarwal castes of UP stated:

> In our society, women wear bangles made of lac. I think this is very bad. Women become impure by wearing them. Most of the lac *manihars* are Muslims. The money earned by selling these bangles goes to their homes and can be used against our religion. Further, women have to touch and be touched by Muslim hands. Thus, women should not allow Muslim bangle-sellers inside their homes. They should abandon wearing lac bangles and adopt the swadeshi glass bangles instead.[83]

Muslim bangle-sellers were also attacked because bangles were identified as a sign of purity of Hindu women, and to have Muslims touch this purity was a sign

[81] *Ibid.*, pp. 5–10. Also see Hare, *Alarm Bell*; Jha, *Hinduon Jaago*, pp. 12–15; Anon., 'Stitva Raksha ke Prati', *Dampati*, Vol. 1(1), August 1930, pp. 87–89.

[82] *Dabdaba-i-Qaisari*, 22 July 1893, *NNR*.

[83] Poddar, *Samaj Sudhar*, p. 25.

of the pollution of Hindu religion. Though caste distinctions were important, the greatest pollution and impurity was identified in relation to the Muslims. The purity/pollution rituals and taboos were thus in a sense redirected and reformulated. There were various meetings in 1927 at Mathura, Khurja, Kanpur and Tirwa, where Hindu women were coerced into boycotting Muslim bangle-sellers. Gomti Devi of Kanpur, a prominent member of Arya Samaj, said that in order to prevent this enticement, she had set up Hindu widows in the business of selling bangles and established 'Hindu Gomti Churi Mandals'.[84] Successful efforts were made to boycott Muslim *manihars* in Agra,[85] and as a result, Hindu bangle-sellers reported brisk and big sales.[86]

These various injunctions sent multiple messages. They endorsed the vulnerability of the Hindu woman and the strength of the Hindu man. They constructed notions of decency, propriety and *dharma* and, above all, they revealed a growing suspicion of any aspect of the cultural, social and economic life of Hindu women that was perceived to be outside the control of the Hindu community. Everyday life was an arena where female competence and contact was indisputable. It was a realm where they exercised social influence through their work in the family and outside the home, their 'nurturant power' and their social networks, their endurance and flexibility. Sexual affiliations and relations between women and men were a crucial aspect of this prism. And it was precisely this locus of exchange which was perceived as a threat. Thus, everyday cultural spaces of women were attacked in the name of religion.

The narrative style of the discourse against shared culture predominantly took the form of a personalised 'homely', day-to-day conversation, explaining things at a one-to-one level. At the same time, it addressed itself to a vast Hindu audience. All came together, and the distance between the preacher and the listener was bridged. Mahatma Premanand Baanprasthi, a member of Arya Samaj and writer of numerous thin tracts against shared culture, specialised in this tactic.[87] His pamphlets were written in the form of a simple conversation, where a *bhikshu* initiated the discussion and then the whole community—with its questions, answers and suggestions—joined in. There were no distinctions here. *All* Hindus, women and men, low caste and upper caste, urban and rural, and literate and illiterate, were part of the conversation.

[84] *PAI*, 30 July 1927, No. 29, Para 729, p. 294; 3 September 1927, No. 34, Para 838, p. 336; 24 September 1927, No. 37, Para 912, p. 368; 19 November 1927, No. 44, Para 1086, p. 438.

[85] *Home Poll.*, File No. 32/1927, 'Fortnightly Report of UP for the Second Half of September 1927', NAI; *PAI*, 2 July 1927, No. 25, p. 248.

[86] *PAI*, 24 September 1927, No. 37, Para 912, p. 368.

[87] He wrote at least 15 thin pamphlets, mostly between 1926 and 1928. These were published by Baba Tribhuwan Nath, Secretary, Arya Samaj, Sultanpur, Awadh; and printed at Leader Press, Allahabad. Of each tract, at least 4,000 copies were published. They were a part of a series and seem to have been distributed free. The titles themselves are revealing: *Musalmani Gorakh Dhanda*, *Brahman ke Chheh Karm*, *Barah Bhagwan*, *Ghazi Kaun Hai*, *Larkon ki Loot*, *Isaion ki Chaalbazi*, *Kaun Jati Musalman Hui aur Kyon*, *Moharram Hussain aur Tazia*, *Ghazi Mian ki Kartoot*, *Panchon Pir Auliya*, *Panch Paon ki Gai*, *Avtaron ki Philosophy*, *Premanand Sandhya* and *Premanand Bhajanavali*.

III

Besides the economic and social boycott, instructions to Hindu women were more specially aimed at their relationship with religious festivals and *pirs*. Saints' shrines were part of the multifaceted cultural systems of many regions, attracting vast numbers because it was believed that they had miraculous healing powers, that they bestowed children to the childless, ended quarrels, and also offered varied forms of entertainment.[88] In UP too, we get many examples of popular cults, *tazia* worship, and visits to *pirs* and *mazars*, as well as the melas around them, which have a long history, in which lower-caste Hindus, and women and children participated.[89]

Women particularly venerated saints' shrines as they were linked with cures for infertility.[90] The desire for male progeny and the fact that being a *baanjh* (barren woman) was considered one of the worst abuses, attracted women to *pirs*. They further provided a relief for women from the recurring crises of family life. Here they could ask for jobs for husbands, health for children and express fears of tyrannies within the household. They went and met whoever made promises to them, impervious to the crossing of caste, class and religious boundaries. Women also found in such religious activities an emotional and recreational satisfaction, and freedom from household chores. Thus, there were potent existential reasons for women to turn to saints for solace.[91] The Hindu women of the region considered it particularly auspicious for small children to walk across from underneath the *tazias*.[92] They, along with Muslim women, chanted *dirges* in groups, on the night of the ninth and tenth day of Muharram, and had great faith in the supernatural and benevolent powers of Imam Husain, his family members and companions.[93] As remarkable was the reach and spread of *tazia* and *pir* worship, equally noteworthy was the way zealous Hindu purifiers made them a special butt of attack, again addressing themselves to Hindu women significantly.

[88] This point has been made by many. See Roy, *Islamic Syncretic Tradition*, pp. 207–48; Bayly, *Saints, Goddesses and Kings*, pp. 73–86; J.J. Roy Burman, 'Hindu-Muslim Syncretism in India', *EPW*, 18 May 1996, pp. 1211–15; C.W. Troll, ed., *Muslim Shrines in India*, Mumbai, 1989; Ahmad, *Studies in Islamic Culture*, pp. 157–66; Eaton, *Sufis of Bijapur*, pp. 19–79.

[89] *Census of India, 1901, North Western Provinces*, Part I: Report, Allahabad, 1902, p. 94. For example, in Bijnor, a local saint known as Goga *pir* was venerated by Hindus and Muslims alike, H.R. Nevill, *Bijnor: A Gazetteer, being Vol. XIV of the District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh*, Allahabad, 1928, p. 87.

[90] W. Crooke, 'Notes on Some Muhammadan Saints and Shrines in the United Provinces', *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. 53, 1924, pp. 97–99.

[91] Babu Lall Gupta, *A Brief Memoir of K.L. Gupta*, Agra, 1895.

[92] Dua, *Society and Culture in Northern India*, p. 61.

[93] Amir Hasan, *Palace Culture of Lucknow*, Delhi, 1983, p. 45; Meer Hasan Ali, *Observations on the Mussulmauns of India*, London, 1917.

There was a strong element of contempt, ridiculing the audacity of women for participating in such cultural and religious practices identified with Muslims. Women were seen as culprits and looked upon with disdain for 'corrupting' Hindu society. In the case of *tazia* worship, *Stri Siksha* said:

> Due to lack of Vedic education in present times, women do not have any understanding . . . . Hindu women should be so firm in their Hindu religion that no craftiness can sway them . . . . They must understand that . . . *tazia* worship . . . is against Hindu religion . . . . Have you completely lost your mind? . . . Who are Hasan, Husain to you? . . . What is your relationship with them? Why do you offer *sherbet* in their name? Pay homage by offering sweets? Beat your breasts? Make your children wear green clothes in their name? Make sweets? Empty leather water-bags [to quench thirst]? What has happened to your brain? . . . Read your ancient history. In spite of staying for months in the home of Ravan demon, Maharani Sita did not become a female demon.[94]

This separation helped define Hindu religion as one established within rules and texts, norms which confined negotiated customs and practices. Another tract, *Hindu aur Tazia*, ended with the following:

> According to sanatan dharma, Hindu women break the bangles of their hands when their husband goes to heaven while they are alive. But these female devotees of *tazia*, these religiously debauched Hindu women break their bangles during the ten days of *tazia* and wail. Thus in some senses they treat their alive husband as dead. Are Hasan and Husain their husbands that they moan like this? In my understanding these women are no less than Hasan's wife Zaada, who poisoned and killed her god-like husband. Not only this, these women even keep *roza* for ten days. Is this not a matter of great shame and tragedy for us?[95]

Tazia was seen as a 'moment of disorder', as it challenged notions of a *pativrata* Hindu woman. In spite of having a husband, she was wearing mourning clothes and expressing her grief in public.[96]

Pirs were especially attacked. *Vyanga Chitravali*, a collection of cartoons on the social evils of society, published by the prestigious 'Chand' press of Allahabad, had a picture of a *pir* sitting near a grave, with some Hindu women worshipping it. The caption read:

[94] Mahopdeshak, *Stri Siksha*, pp. 2–5.

[95] Nand Kishore Jaiswal, *Hindu aur Tazia*, Allahabad, 1919, pp. 16–17; Also see Jha, *Hinduon Jaago*, pp. 12–15.

[96] An attempt was made to shift mourning, a public ritual, from the realm of the public to the private. This was not just an attack on *tazia* but was also a rhetoric of removing women from public spaces into the home, as a restrained woman was preferred to an excited one.

tentis koti devta tajkar, tajkar kul ki sab maryada!
pir pujati mahilaon mein, dekho hai kaisa unmaad!!
(Abandoning 33 crore Gods, abandoning the prestige of the family; see the frenzy of these women who worship *pirs*.)[97]

Another collection of new poems sang this for Hindu women:

nij priyatam taj pir pujo, budhi hai kaisi pathrani.
Mian madar mare murdon mein, muhn baiye phirti baurani.
(You are totally senseless because abandoning your own Gods, you worship *pirs*. Like a mad person gaping everywhere, you go to Muslims, saints and graves.)[98]

The greater the popularity of a particular *pir*, the sharper was the attack. The cult of Ghazi Mian and his mela are the most visible example of this. Sayyid Salar Mas'ud Ghazi, popularly known as Ghazi Mian, was the best known of the saints and the oldest. William Crooke stated:

> Pirs and Sayyads (saints) . . . are usually of Muhammadan origin, but most of them are worshipped indiscriminately both by Musalmans and low class Hindus . . . . Similarly at the Muharram celebrations and at the pilgrimages to tombs like that of Ghazi Miyan, a large number of votaries are Hindus. In many towns the maintenance of these Muhammadan festivals mainly depends on the assistance of the Hindus . . . . Ghazi Miyan . . . tomb is visited as much by Hindus as by Muhammadans. Besides his regular shrine at Bahraich, he has cenotaphs in various places, as at Gorakhpur and Bhadohi, in the Mirzapur district, where annual fairs are held in his honour.[99]

Ghazi Mian had been a part of the Panch Pir (Five Saints) since a very long time. The names of Panch Pir differed from district to district, but broadly they were Muhammed Ghuri, Ghazi Mian, Subhat, Palihar and Sati Amina. The Panchpiriya sect was followed by the mass of peasantry in eastern UP and had the largest number of adherents, amounting to no less than 13.5 million in the late nineteenth century. It was worshipped by some 53 castes, of whom 44 were wholly or partially

[97] *Vyanga Chitravali*, Allahabad, 1930.

[98] Ramanand Saraswati, *Navin Gyan Gajra*, Aligarh, 1924, p. 17.

[99] W. Crooke, *An Introduction to the Popular Religion and Folklore of Northern India*, Allahabad, 1894, pp. 127–28, 131. Also see Jafar Sharif, *Islam in India or the Qanun-i-Islam: The Customs of the Musalmans of India*, composed and trans. by G.A. Herklots and new ed., revised and rearranged with additions by William Crooke, Curzon Press, 1972, first printed in 1921, pp. 9, 166. It stated that Saint Salar Masud was worshipped by large crowds, of which the majority were Hindus, and that it pointed to the close association of Hinduism and Islam among the lower class votaries of both religions.

Hindu, whilst of that number, no less than 16 were of 'good social standing' and only eight could be termed as 'unorthodox'. At the end of the nineteenth century, Ghazi Mian was reckoned to be foremost among the Panch Pir.[100]

Ghazi Mian was seen as a bestower of fertility and as a patron of children. There were many tales on how Ghazi Mian came to the rescue of Hindu women,[101] specifically of the lower castes. One legend had it that the barren wife of a Hindu milkman, Jesu Ahir, had been blessed with a son on praying at Ghazi Mian's grave and as a result he had rebuilt his grave with pure cow milk and costly lime.[102] Another story said that Ghazi Mian came to the help of an aged widow by the name Sardani, and by caste a Malin, whom he found weeping hysterically. On the inquiry of the kind hero, she told him that every year in Banaras one person was sacrificed at the temple of Somnath where sorcery was prevalent. Of her six sons, five had already been slaughtered. Now it was the turn of her last son, and it was his wedding day. Ghazi at once offered to stand in as a substitute.[103] Some women considered him a sincere lover, whose marriage remained incomplete every year, resulting in marriage attempts each year, celebrated through his mela.[104] A huge Ghazi Mian ka mela was observed at many places in eastern UP. The biggest annual fair took place at Bahraich, as his grave stood in the village of Singha Parasi, located very close to the town. Sikandar Lodi and Aurangzeb unsuccessfully tried to stop the mela, regarding it as repugnant to the traditions of orthodox Islam.[105] At the turn of the century, it regularly drew an assembly of over 100,000 people, many of whom were Hindus.[106] Picturesque flags were brought to the fair by the pilgrims, worked in gay colours with figures of men and animals on them. These were mounted on high bamboos with coins tied up in a knot on the point.

[100] Pandey, *Construction*, pp. 86–87; R. Greevan, 'Benaras: An Account of the Worship of the Panchon Pir', *North Indian Notes and Queries*, Vol. 2(2), May 1892, p. 20; Baanprasthi, *Isaiyon ki Chaalbazi aur Panchon Pir*, [collection of two tracts, which were also published separately, the one on Panch Pir being titled *Panchon Pir Auliya*], Awadh, 1927, pp. 5–6. Also available in his *Musalmani Gorakh Dhanda*, Awadh, 1927, which is again a collection of seven tracts, which were published separately and also together.

[101] It has been argued that Muslims particularly narrate this aspect of Ghazi Mian. By so doing, they attempt a reversal of the negative image of Muslim personhood presented in the dominant legends. His chaste life is stressed, to show him to be an exemplary Muslim hero, defending Hindu women especially, Mary Searle-Chatterjee, 'The Muslim Hero as Defender of Hindus: Mythic Reversals and Ethnicity among Banaras Muslims', *Social Analysis*, Vol. 28, July 1990, pp. 78–79.

[102] Tahir Mahmood, 'The Dargah of Sayyid Salar Mas'ud Ghazi in Bahraich: Legend, Tradition and Reality', in Troll, *Muslim Shrines in India*, p. 29.

[103] Story given in R. Greevan, 'Benaras: An Account of the Worship of the Panchon Pir', *North Indian Notes and Queries*, Vol. 2(4), July 1892, p. 55; Searle-Chatterjee, 'The Muslim Hero', p. 72.

[104] Interview with Dr Anand Krishna, Banaras, 18 February 1998. It is said that he made seven attempts to marry, but each time he was prevented by some untoward event, Searle-Chatterjee, 'The Muslim Hero', pp. 72–73.

[105] Mahmood, 'The Dargah of Sayyid Salar Mas'ud Ghazi', p. 25.

[106] Pandey, *Construction*, p. 87.

Ghazi Mian was in fact identified with a flag, which was a symbol of his worship. *Daffalis* sang songs in praise of Ghazi Mian and were given alms by Hindus and Muslims. Women charmers predicted the future of the people during the mela. It ended with kite flying and wrestling matches.[107]

The Hindu publicists focused chiefly on Ghazi Mian for their attack, as he not only challenged caste and community boundaries but, by attracting women, posed a serious threat to Hindu masculinity and patriarchy. At least a dozen tracts were written between 1924 and 1927, censuring Ghazi Mian and his worship.[108] For the Hindu reformers and revivalists, the conspicuousness and widespread nature of the Panch Pir, where everyone intermingled freely, was a serious threat to the Hindu community's redefinition of identities. The worship of Ghazi Mian was not a 'hidden', private act; it was a highly public show. It has been argued that expanding public arenas became a major place for Hindu religious resurgence and assertion in north India.[109] A highly visible public arena, which challenged Hindu community identity inevitably became the object of attack. The participation of Hindu women, perceived as preservers of Hindu tradition and identity, would have added to the fear. Thus, a main concern was that 'Hindu people worship *tazia*, Ghazi Mian in the open, in front of everybody'; 'all can see it, experience it and know it'; 'millions of Hindus worship him',[110] suggesting a collective reality of

[107] Account of Ghazi Mian and his mela based on Dr Motichandra, *Kasi ka Itihas*, Bombay, 1962, p. 404; Mahmood, 'The Dargah of Sayyid Salar Mas'ud Ghazi', pp. 24–43; Iqtidar Husain Siddiqui, 'A Note on the Dargah of Salar Mas'ud in Bahraich in the Light of the Standard Historical Sources', in Troll, *Muslim Shrines in India*, pp. 44–47; Kerein Grafin von Schwerin, 'Saint Worship in Indian Islam: The Legend of the Martyr Salar Masud Ghazi', in Imtiaz Ahmad, ed., *Ritual and Religion among Muslims in India*, N. Delhi, 1981, pp. 143–61; Crooke, *Introduction to the Popular Religion*, pp. 127–28, 131; H.R. Nevill, *Bahraich: A Gazetteer, being Vol. XIV of the District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh*, Allahabad, 1903, pp. 149–50; A. Fuhrer, *The Monumental Antiquities and Inscriptions in the North Western Provinces and Oudh*, Allahabad, 1891, p. 292. Many provinces of UP witnessed the fair. For example, at Allahabad, on the first Sunday in *Jeth*, the fair was celebrated at Sikandra, Daryabad and Patti Jalal, H.R. Nevill, *Allahabad: A Gazetteer, being Vol. XXII of the District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh*, Allahabad, 1928, p. 67; *India*, N. Delhi, 1981, pp. 143–61.

[108] To mention a few, Bhagirath Prasad Dikshit, *Ghazi Mian aur Unki Puja*, Agra, 1923 and again published from Banaras, 1925; Ram Piare Tiwari, *Ghazi Mian ki Jivani*, Banaras, 1926; Ram Piare Tiwari, *Ghazi Mian ki Puja*, Banaras, 1926; Brajesh Singh, *Ghazi Mian ka Bhanda Phor*, Allahabad, 1927; Baanprasthi, *Ghazi Kaun Hai*; Babu Nandkishore Jaiswal, *Ghazi Mian Arthat Masood Ghazi ka Sacca Jivan Caritr*, Allahabad, 1916; Brajmohan Jha, *Saiyid Salar Masud ka Jivan Caritr*, Etawah, 1925; Pt. Jagatnarayan Sharma, *Ghazi Mian ki Puja: Hinduon ko Kya Sujha*, Etawah, 1905. Though Ghazi Mian was specially targeted, there were others like Miran Mulla Sadaruddin, popularly known as Saddo, who lies buried at Amroha, Moradabad, who were also vilified, Shankar Dat Sharma, *Miran Puja*, Moradabad, 1925. Also see *Statement of Particulars regarding Books and Periodicals Published in the United Provinces*, 1924–27. It is interesting that the worship of Ghazi Mian is repugnant even to orthodox Islamic teachings, Mahmood, 'The Dargah of Sayyid Salar Mas'ud Ghazi', pp. 25,41.

[109] Freitag, *Collective Action*, pp. 191–96, 230–48.

[110] Baanprasthi, *Paanchon Pir*, pp. 5–7.

group life. It was Ghazi Mian's popularity and the communicative reach of his worship that were to be stopped.

Hindu women (including many upper caste women) and lower castes were particularly besought, ordered and coerced not to worship Ghazi Mian: women, because they were seen as icons and carriers of faith, and lower castes, because they were seen as embodying a debased form of faith. Deviation in the first had to be curtailed and the second had to be weaned away from their 'corrupt' practices. Many *jati* reformers also made similar appeals.[111] Every year, when the mela drew nearer, usually in the months of May and June, the campaign acquired a feverish tone. A movement was launched in the shape of pamphlets, posters, resolutions, picketing and warnings.[112] Many of these deterrents were aimed at women. At a series of Arya Samaj meetings at Meerut, Subhadra Devi begged Hindu women not to make offerings at tombs.[113] At a meeting of the Ahir Sabha in Faizabad, men were advised not to allow their childless women to visit the Saiyid Salar 'Muhammadan' mela at Bahraich.[114] Volunteers endeavoured to prevent Hindu women from attending the fair.[115] At another meeting it was said that Hindu women should

[111] Editor, 'Ghazi Mian ki Puja: Vidyarthi Utho—Hindu Dharm Ki Raksha Karo', *Kurmi Kshatriya Diwakar*, Vol. 2(3), May 1926, pp. 2–8.

[112] At Sultanpur a movement of this kind was afoot in May 1924, *PAI*, 31 May 1924, No. 21, Para 171, p. 177. Next year at Gorakhpur, there was an attempt to boycott the fair, and intending Hindu visitors were dissuaded from going to it, and at Meerut notices were issued for the same, *PAI*, 23 May 1925, No. 19, Para 156, p. 210; *PAI*, 6 June 1925, No. 21, Para 169, p. 224. In 1926, the movement spread wider. At Azamgarh a Hindi letter of the 'snowball' variety was received from Ayodhya and contrary to the usual custom, Hindus did not give alms to *daffalis* on the occasion of the Ghazi Mian mela in Didarganj. At Jaunpur, a pamphlet prohibited Ghazi Mian's worship and the approaches to the mela, held in the city on 26 May, were picketed by Jagannath Pandey *vakil* and other Hindus, but no Hindu attempted to attend. At Azamgarh, *khatiks* and *mallahs* were persuaded by Arya Samaj not to attend the mela that year. Another Hindi notice appeared at Kheri and opposition to the mela grew at Gorakhpur. At Banaras, Arya Samajists were actively employed in preventing Hindus from attending the local Ghazi Mian mela, *PAI*, 22 May 1926, No. 19, Para 498, p. 277; *PAI*, 5 June 1926, No. 21, Para 533, p. 308; *PAI*, 12 June 1926, No. 22, Para 553, p. 320; *PAI*, 19 June 1926, No. 23, Para 560, p. 327. In 1927, the campaign reached its peak. At Faizabad, Hindi notices printed by the Narayan Press and issued by Baldeo Sahai urged Hindus against going to Bahraich for the mela. At Bahraich itself, a massive propaganda was started by the Arya Samajists in April itself, as the mela was to be held that year from 18 to 22 May. At Pratapgarh, Raja of Kalakankar joined the Arya Samaj to campaign for the boycott, and was successful in persuading some Hindus. Parties of pilgrims were turned back to avoid the mela. At Gonda, during the annual conference of UP Kshatriya Sabha, Hindus were exhorted not to attend the Syed Salar fair at Bahraich. At Faizabad, Kedar Nath spoke against the mela, and notices were also posted against it. Here some Brahmans forbade Hindu shopkeepers from attending it and proposed to outcast those who did. In Allahabad, handbills appeared in the city against the Ghazi Mian mela held at Phulpur. At Banaras, notices were circulated, and at Sultanpur some local Hindus attempted to discourage attendance at the mela, *PAI*, 23 April 1927, No. 15, Para 371, p. 144; *PAI*, 30 April 1927, No. 16, Para 379, p. 154; *PAI*, 21 May 1927, No. 19, Para 489, p. 186; *PAI*, 28 May 1927, No. 20, Para 500, p. 192; *PAI*, 4 June 1927, No. 21, Para 530, p. 202.

[113] *PAI*, 13 March 1926, No. 10, Para 233, p. 136.

[114] *PAI*, 23 April 1927, No. 15, Para 371, p. 144.

[115] *PAI*, 7 May 1927, No. 17, Para 432, p. 169.

not visit the Ghazi Mian mosque with bedridden children because Muslims spit at them.[116] Concern was expressed to save women from Ghazi Mian's trap.[117] Husbands were asked to persuade wives that Ghazi Mian was a very inferior being.[118] It was stated

> God believes in the worship of only one husband for women, but they pay service to Ghazi Mian for many years . . . . Where before Hindu women worshipped their husband with a lot of love and produced a child, today they leave their husband and go to the dead Ghazi Mian and at his defunct grave, to ask for a child. It is not women, but men who are to be blamed for this hateful act. Even when they are alive, instead of asking their wife to be a true *pativrata*, they allow her to go to the dead grave of a *turk* to ask for a child and become an infidel. Today such a husband should commit suicide whose wife thinks of him as an impotent or does not fear God, and instead of asking her husband to protect the child, is asking a dead grave to protect him. This is a slur on the prestige of Hindu religion.[119]

Going to Ghazi Mian or any other *pir* had implications for the sexuality of Hindu women, Hindu men and Muslim *pirs*. Implicit here was the fear of a sensuous 'play' between the *pir* and the body of the woman, which would subvert authority at home. There were anxieties of 'women on top', gaining power over Hindu men. Women's private, secret alliance with the *pir* was seen as an open challenge to Hindu male prowess, and their husband's power to give them a male child was undermined by their dependency upon Ghazi Mian for it. The Hindu male appeared emasculated in relation to the increasingly virile Muslim *pir*. It became a question of impugning the sexuality and masculinity of the Hindu male through the actions of women. To overcome this, much was made of the alleged sexual exploitation of Hindu women by unscrupulous *pirs*.

Beliefs in the saint were also maligned through a dose of 'rationality', and women were shown lacking intelligence. Here again it was the sexual prowess of the *pir*, and his growing control over women's sexuality and reproductivity that was called into question. In a tract when someone said that Ghazi Mian had tremendous powers and bestowed a son on a *baanjh* woman, another person ridiculed him saying that Ghazi Mian himself did not have a son, so how could he give one to anybody? Pointing to another worshipper he went on to say that this person had a *baanjh* in his house but Ghazi Mian had done nothing.[120] It was argued: 'Can there be any progress of Hinduism through the religion of the Masjid? Can Ghazi Mian show the path of freedom? Can he bestow any favour? Clearly no.'[121]

[116] *PAI*, 22 June 1929, No. 22, Para 311, p. 246.
[117] Baanprasthi, *Ghazi Kaun Hai*, p. 4.
[118] Sharma, *Ghazi Mian*, pp. 11–12.
[119] Jaiswal, *Ghazi Mian*, pp. 52–53.
[120] Premanand Baanprasthi, *Larkon ki Loot*, Awadh, 1927, p. 1.
[121] Sharma, *Ghazi Mian*, p. 3.

Combined with these persuasive tactics, there were also open threats, a rhetoric which inspired fear on the one hand and promised rewards on the other. Women and low castes were warned that worshipping Ghazi Mian would spell disaster for them and a sense of foreboding was created. On the other hand, if they stopped worshipping Ghazi Mian, it would pay them rich dividends and they would soon be rewarded. Threats of dire spiritual and material misfortune were raised. At a general level it was predicted:

> Hindus! There has been a forecast at Prayag Raj that no Hindu should go to worship Ghazi Mian at Bahraich, as Devi is very angry because of it. It is due to this that *sitala* (smallpox) is spreading into every house and causing you great pain this year . . . . Stop worshipping Ghazi Mian immediately, otherwise there will be a massive drought in the country, children will face dire consequences, animals will increasingly fall ill, your clan will decrease and there will be all-round misery. If you do not worship him then Devi will be happy and you will reap the fruits equal to feeding a hundred Brahmins . . . . Whoever listens or reads to this forecast should definitely tell it to 11 Hindus and send the news to five villages, otherwise he would be accused of killing 21 cows.[122]

The fear could be evoked in women in diverse ways. A tract warned that women who worshipped Ghazi Mian became widows within a few days. The dirty and foul breath of cow-killers made their sons ill.[123] It was said that Muslims often spit at Hindu boys. They were also influenced by Muslim customs, ways and manners and were susceptible to conversion.[124] Emphasis was laid on the sin committed by Hindu women in going to the tomb to pray for issue.[125] A newspaper said that if Hindus were not already a dead nation they would become so by their women's worship of dead bodies.[126] A feeling of terror was created about the mela being a place where Hindu women were abducted and outraged.[127] In May–June 1925, the deputy commissioner of the region prevented Arya Samaj propaganda at the Bahraich fair. Various newspapers raised the fear that because of this, the position of Hindu women visiting the fair had become very perilous.[128] Hindu women were

[122] Premanand Baanprasthi, *Musalmani Gorakh Dhanda*, Awadh, 1927, p. 6. Also see Anon., 'Bale Mian', *Adarsh Hindu*, Vol. 1(5), May 1926, p. 31. Fear among Hindus was inculcated in various meetings, especially the dread of committing a crime equivalent to killing cows, if they worshipped Ghazi Mian. At Banaras, in May 1927, a notice issued by one Yamdut was freely circulating in the city. It was captioned 'Sri Gao Mata Ki Jai', and stated that Hindus who attended the Saiyed Salar fair would be guilty of the death of 11 cows. At Jaunpur in 1928, Arya Samajists gave the same warning, and it was repeated at Bahraich in 1929, *PAI*, 28 May 1927, No. 20, Para 500, p. 192; *PAI*, 19 May 1928, No. 19, Para 381, p. 189; *PAI*, 28 March 1929, No. 12, Para 147, p. 100.

[123] Jha, *Hinduon Jaago*, p. 12.

[124] Sharma, *Ghazi Mian*, p. 13.

[125] *PAI*, 21 December 1929, No. 49, Para 792, p. 708.

[126] *Gyan Shakti*, week ending 30 May 1925, *NNR*.

[127] Anon., 'Bale Mian', p. 31.

[128] *Hindustani, Arya Mitra, Pratap*, week ending 23 May 1925, *NNR*.

notified of the probability of outrages committed against them.[129] *Vartman* said that Hindu volunteers recovered 99 Hindu women from the possession of Muslim rowdies at the Syed Salar fair. The ill-treatment of the Hindu women was shocking and it would be 'indelicate' to say what happened to them inside the mausoleum.[130] Muslim *goondas* were accused of outraging women at the fair at almost all times.[131] The circle was completed with the inverted proposition: 'If you stop worshipping Ghazi Mian, you will be blessed with a son.'[132] By such claims, the Hindu male was reasserting his power over the sexuality and reproductivity of the Hindu woman.

In the process, the very history of Bahraich was also restructured and reformulated. It was argued that before Ghazi Mian's *dargah* came up, there had been a celebrated *suryakund* here, as important as *tirathraj* Prayag, which was host to a big mela. It was known as *Balakarth Tirth*. In the month of *Jeth* when the sun was at its peak, people used to come and bathe in its holy water and it cured all their illnesses—the blind could see and all skin ailments were cured. But since Feroz Tughlaq built the grave of Ghazi Mian here in 1351 by filling this very *suryakund*, people are no longer cured at Bahraich. In this way, a holy place of sun worship of one community was transformed into the grave of Ghazi Mian. Now, on that very day the Bahraich mela of Ghazi Mian is celebrated. Again Hindus gather here, but this time they do not worship the sun, but the evil Ghazi Mian. It was also hinted that many other holy places of Hindus had been converted in a similar manner into *dargah*s and graves of *pir*s.[133] The story, a part of 'a new Hindu history',[134] in one stroke enabled a number of things—it attacked the violent invasion of Muslims, stressed the power of Hindu beliefs, evoked a golden age of Hindu civilisation, denied the capacity of Ghazi Mian to heal and built a Hindu history of the very place where the grave rested, thereby undercutting the very basis of his worship.

Ghazi Mian, a symbol of wishes being fulfilled, transcending narrow sectarian boundaries and a figure renowned for dispensing evil, was now himself recast in the role of an evil character. An alternative picture of Ghazi Mian was painted. It was said that he came to India and plundered temples, broke idols, killed thousands of cows, murdered and converted Hindus, outraged their women, kidnapped Hindu girls, violated them and married them off to Muslims.[135] And then Ghazi Mian was directly connected to a more common, popular, identified memory. It was stated that

[129] *PAI*, 6 June 1925, No. 21, Para 169, p. 224.

[130] *Vartman*, week ending 20 June 1925, *NNR*.

[131] *PAI*, 29 May 1927, No. 20, Para 500, p. 192; *PAI*, 5 May 1928, No. 17, Para 325, p. 165; Jha, *Hinduon Jaago*, p. 12; Baanprasthi, *Larkon ki Loot*, p. 18.

[132] Baanprasthi, *Larkon ki Loot*, p. 4.

[133] Anon., 'Bale Mian', pp. 28–29; Editor, 'Ghazi Mian Ki Puja', pp. 2–6; Dixit, *Ghazi Mian*.

[134] Gyanendra Pandey, 'A New Hindu History', *South Asia*, Vol. XVII, 1994, pp. 97–112. He uses the term to underline the appeal of such a history in the specific context of the Ram Janmabhoomi movement of the Hindu Right.

[135] Baanprasthi, *Larkon ki Loot*, p. 12; Anon., 'Bale Mian', pp. 29–30; Editor, 'Ghazi Mian ki Puja', pp. 3–4; *PAI*, 28 May 1927, No. 20, Para 500, p. 192; *PAI*, 28 March 1929, No. 12, Para 147, p. 100.

Ghazi Mian destroyed the Somnath temple with Mahmud Ghaznavi,[136] and that he was the same as the killer of Swami Shraddhanand. Thus a conversation between Puttu (a Muslim and devotee of Ghazi Mian) and a *bhikshu* ensued:

> *Bhikshu*: Mahmud Ghaznavi was the uncle of Ghazi Mian who destroyed temples at Mathura and Somnath . . . .
> *Puttu*: To kill *kafirs* is not against religion.
> *Bhikshu*: Thus a cruel Muslim killed the King of Hindus—Swami Shraddhanand.
> *Puttu*: Take his name with respect. He is Ghazi. His photographs are sold.
> *Bhikshu*: Photographs are even sold of Tantiya Bhil robber.
> *Puttu*: Ghazi is he who kills *kafirs*. . . . This is the speciality of Ghazi Mian's family.
> *Bhikshu:* What are those hairs on top of the Ghazi Mian flag?
> *Puttu*: They were the *chotis* of people that were cut to make them Muslims . . . . Some were tails of cows.[137]

In this situation, it was said:

> *jisne tumhara kar diya sab bhanti banthadhar hai.*
> *ghazi mian ko pujte ho, hinduon! dhitkar hai!*
> (Ghazi Mian has completely destroyed you.
> Hindus you need to be severely condemned for worshipping him.)[138]

There was an attempt to shift the basis of energy, activity, desire, expression and belief of an individual and of a society, and to replace it with symbols of Hindu gods and goddesses. Notices and circulars were issued at Pratapgarh exhorting women to worship Lakshmi Devi instead of Ghazi Mian.[139] It was stated in categorical terms that Hindu religion, its texts and Gods were far superior to any other religion. It was a religion which worshipped many Gods who were symbols of life, not tombs like that of Ghazi Mian.[140] It was argued that it was a Hindu king, Suhaldev, who finally defeated and killed the evil Ghazi Mian in a war and saved the Hindu religion, but his name had completely disappeared from our memory. He was as brave as Shivaji and if Hindus should worship anyone, it was Suhaldev.[141] Women were told that they had 33 crore Gods to choose from and worship, so why go for Ghazi Mian? Kalwars, who had been devout worshippers of Ghazi Mian, took up the campaign earnestly.[142] *Kalwar Kesari*, a journal of the Kalwar

[136] Jaiswal, *Ghazi Mian*, p. 9.
[137] Baanprasthi, *Ghazi Kaun Hai*, pp. 7–8.
[138] Baanprasthi, *Musalmani Gorakh Dhanda*, cover.
[139] *PAI*, 21 May 1927, No. 19, Para 489, p. 186.
[140] Sharma, *Ghazi Mian ki Puja*, pp. 2–3; Anon., 'Bale Mian', p. 32; Editor, 'Ghazi Mian ki Puja', p. 2.
[141] Anon., 'Bale Mian', pp. 28, 30–31.
[142] Jaiswal, who wrote *Ghazi Mian Arthat Masood Ghazi ka Sacca Jivan Caritr*, viciously attacking the cult of Ghazi Mian, was a Kalwar by caste.

caste, appealed to Hindu women to abandon Ghazi Mian completely and worship only Hindu gods and goddesses, since their children would then be firm Hindus.[143] The Hindu reiteration of the worship of only Hindu gods and goddesses created a space where Hindu-Hindu relations were continuously reaffirmed and partially legitimated, in relation to culturally-bound meanings.

In the light of such a powerful campaign, the damage to the forms of shared cultures was considerable. However, all was not lost. It was the organised bodies, associations and groups, claiming to represent caste or Hindu interests, a relatively educated and articulate section, which consciously or unconsciously tended to speak in the same language. But was its impact really all pervasive? Did all the people identify with the politics of these organised bodies? One is not so sure. As late as 1920, it was estimated that more than 13.5 million people worshipped the Panch Pirs.[144] In spite of the assault upon them, some low castes and women did attend the fair in 1926 and again in 1927 the fair passed off harmoniously.[145] Actually the appeal for such a clear break was limited to lower castes. If they were to agree to stop their religious practices, where were they supposed to go, since they were debarred from many Hindu places of worship.[146]

The boundary-seekers, however, were successful to an extent in creating new fissures in the fabric of shared culture at this time, which to an extent may have had some impact on the lower castes as well.[147] The Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, representing 363 Arya Samaj branches of UP, claimed in 1925 that it had been campaigning against the Syed Salar Fair in Bahraich for the last 29 years, and slow and steady success had been most visible in the last four years as a result of their persistent efforts.[148]

As we have seen, even the spokespersons of intermediate and lower castes like the Ahirs, Kalwars and Chamars reiterated some of the arguments, though may be for different reasons. The Hindu woman had been a principal focus throughout this campaign. She was not only to be protected but also disciplined and controlled. Her sexuality and reproductivity could in no way be displayed and shared with Muslim men and symbols, as it signified that the control of the Hindu male was slipping away. She was a symbol of the purity and exclusivity of Hindus and her movements had to be regulated. At the same time, women's uncertain adherence to caste and religious categories was a constant source of threat. Women were used here to provide markers for permissible Hindu conduct. In the process, a remapping of gender boundaries was attempted. The instructions to women not

[143] Anon., 'Sri Sabhapati Mahodaya Ka Bhashan', *Kalwar Kesari*, Vol. 1(12), Lucknow, 1923, p. 715.

[144] Pandey, *Construction*, p. 87.

[145] *PAI*, 19 June 1926, No. 23, Para 560, p. 327; *PAI*, 4 June 1927, No. 21, Para 530, p. 202.

[146] In fact, Ghazi Mian ka mela continues to this day, attracting people from afar. See Mahmood, 'The Dargah of Sayyid Salar Mas'ud', pp. 24–43.

[147] Hindu participation in Muharram declined drastically, Shaligram Shrivastava, *Prayag Pradip*, Allahabad, 1937, p. 103.

[148] *General Adm. Deptt.*, File No. 701/1925, 'Representation from the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, Meerut, Regarding the Prohibition of Arya Samaj Processions in UP', UPSA.

only mirrored an attack on syncretism, but also provided definitions for the borders of Hinduism. The targeting of shared spaces also indicated that many social, economic and cultural issues were being interpreted by the Hindu publicists through the prism of religious consciousness.

IV

Though I have taken up in detail only one specific case of increasing fractures in common cultural and religious spaces, the magnitude of attacks on contacts between Hindu women and Muslim men was much more widespread, employing multiple methods. Anti-abduction campaigns, shifting debates on widow remarriage, anxiety over declining Hindu numbers, fears created by elopements and conversions by some Hindu women (particularly widows, low caste women and prostitutes) created a complex discourse which could be 'creatively' used to strengthen community identities and lead to sharper polarisation. The reality was not so all-inclusive and obvious tensions on the ground could not be wished away so easily. However, the Hindu publicists were able to project a core of homogeneity and coherence of Hindus through various campaigns, which supposedly affected all, even those who were on the margins of the Hindu community. Especially in relation to the 'other', this projection was able to effectively use the figure of the Hindu woman. The attack on shared culture went beyond questions of Hindu identity and encompassed questions of patriarchy and economic necessities. Thus, the ground on which Hindu women stood was a kind of battlefield for Hindu publicists.

While many devices and methodologies were used, the repetitive motif adopted in a wide variety of situations was centrally aimed at severing all interaction between Hindu women and Muslim men. It was linked not only to questions of community boundaries, but also to those of sexuality and patriarchy. This provided a common reference point for the Hindus. Recurrent arguments emphasised the separation between Hindu women and Muslim men much more in this period than, say, that between upper caste Hindu women and lower caste Hindu men, signifying that perhaps community identities became more crucial than caste identities in this period for the Hindu publicists.

Equally, there were attempts to monopolise everyday life and events of Hindu women. The transmission was integrated and had a bonding to daily existence, suggesting that stereotypes have a much larger and wider history. These campaigns and writings offered a section of Hindus a basis for information, and an interpretation of their daily experiences, while at the same time underscoring their sense of a Hindu identity. It is not just 'spectacular' moments of strife, be it cow protection clashes, riots at festivals or music over mosque controversies, which tell us the full story of communal antagonisms. It is from the antagonisms of everyday life that the greater mass conflicts of society are often generated. The interpretations of these daily experiences could well provide a basis for collective action, even though the explicit issue for violence could be different.