

QUAID-I-AZAM AND THE MUSLIM IDENTITY IN SOUTH ASIA

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Abstract

Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah had a peculiar resort to underscore the distinct nature of Muslim identity, individuality, distinctiveness, character or the Muslim self during the freedom struggle of Muslim of the Indian Subcontinent. He strived for the achievement of political rights of the Muslims in his entire political career, particularly after 1913 when he joined the All India Muslim League. In deed each of his statement and speech shows his deep understanding of Islam. Due to his prolific character, courage and leadership, Quaid-i-Azam not only established the Muslim of Subcontinent as a separate nation but also won them as an independent Islamic state. That is why the life anecdote of Quaid-i-Azam is not merely the story of an individual but the renascence of Musلمانan-i-Barr-e-Sagheer (Muslims of the Subcontinent), who rose as a nation for consolidation of an ideological Muslim state.

Key Words

Quaid-i-Azam, Muslim Identity, Freedom Struggle, Independence Movement, Ideological State.

Introduction

The name of Muhammad Ali Jinnah will always go with reverence for the dedicated services which he rendered to the cause of Muslims of sub-continent. He was the central figure of Pakistan Movement, which started after the establishment of British rule over the territorial jurisdiction of Subcontinent causing a sense of

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deprivation for the Muslims of the region. The British government took serious action against the economic and religious rights of the Muslims on the ground of holding them responsible for the War of Independence of 1857 (Ahmad, 1997: 3). According to historical records, Jinnah entered into politics in 1906 from the platform of the Indian National Congress by attending its Calcutta session as a Private Secretary to the then President of the Congress Dadabhai Naoroji (1825-1917). However, Quaid's political career began in essentially 1910 when he was elected as a member of Indian Legislative Council from Bombay. He earned great fame as a lawyer in Bombay where he had started his professional career. He presented Mussalman *Waqf* Validating Bill, which brought him near to the Muslim leaders of Subcontinent. (Afzal, 1966: 1).

Initially, Muhammad Ali Jinnah played a key role in advocating Hindu-Muslim unity from the platform of the Congress but could not materialise it due to non-cooperative attitude of the Congress. This disappointing situation forced him to disassociate himself from the Congress and join the All India Muslim League in 1913 (Ahmad, 1966:167). It was under his dynamic leadership that the same party adopted the Lahore Resolution on March 23, 1940, for the creation of a separate state in Muslim majority areas on the basis of Two Nations Theory, so that they could lead their lives according to the teachings of Islam. The Congress leaders vehemently resisted the Muslims' demand for a separate homeland, but could neither counter nor even stop it. It was due to the singular efforts of Quaid that the Muslims of sub-continent got united and attained a new homeland.

After winning freedom in the name of Pakistan, he could not last long and expired on September 11, 1948. He was laid to rest in Karachi. Jinnah not only established Pakistan, but he himself was a pictogram of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. It indeed was the product of his idea of an Islamic democratic state as an innovative model of state to be followed by others.

The Cause of Muslim Struggle

Muhammad Ali Jinnah was a progeny of the profoundly religious parents. After completing his studies, he returned and appeared to be the youngest barrister. In a short span of time he set up his legal practice and within a few years made a quiet and modest entry into political life. Jinnah started his political career as a nationalist. Gopal Krishna Gokhale (9 May 1866 – 19 February 1915), Dadabai Naoroji (4 September 1825 – 30 June 1917) and Surendranath Banerjee (10 November 1848 – 6 August 1925) helped him in his political career. He was attracted towards the All Indian National Congress. According to Sarojini Naidu, Jinnah wanted to become Gokhale of the Muslims that is why he became the honorary Private Secretary of Dadabhai Naoroji (Alvi, 2002:43).

His religious inclination and attachment with Muslim welfare was evident as he had taken part in the Anjuman-i-Islam activities, an organization of the Muslims. In the first meeting of the Anjuman-i-Islam on July 8, 1897 and later on August 12, he attended the Eid–Melad-un-Nabi [Urdu: Prophet Muhammad’s birthday] ceremony of the Anjuman-i-Islam. That shows his love for the Prophet and Islam (Ahmad, 1996: 4). Muhammad Ali Jinnah never hesitated in advancing the cause of Muslims to a position of political importance in the national politics. Even as a member of the Congress, Jinnah played an active role for the followers of Islam. As a member the Imperial Legislative Council he moved the Mussalman Waqf Validating Bill in the Council on March 17, 1911.

As a result of the decision of the Privy Council, it had invalidated testamentary gifts of Muslim property left in tax free Waqf (Trust) for ultimate reversion to the religious charity. The Muslims felt anxious over the Privy Council’s decision but were helpless against the British government. Jinnah took upon himself, as a representative of the Muslim community in the Council to move the Waqf Validating Bill seeking legislative reversal of the Privy Council’s decision charging that it was opposed to the basic principles of Islamic jurisprudence. After a long discussion extending over a period of two years, Jinnah succeeded in getting the bill passed on March 5, 1913. It

was the first issue on which he ‘opened his mouth in the Council’ and it was the first religious bill moved by a Muslim member of the Imperial Legislative Council, which became law of the land to the advantage of the Indian Muslims (Safdar Mahmood, 2004). He worked in Congress as a moderate Nationalist Muslim (Alvi, 2002: 43).

From 1913 to 1920, Quaid-i-Azam was member of both the Congress as well as the Muslim League. He was a respectable personality in both the organizations. After joining the Muslim League in 1913, he demanded for the Muslims separate electorates. While addressing the Bombay Provincial Conference held at Ahmadabad in October 1916, he said: “The demand for separate electorates of the Muslims is their right and I would, therefore, request to my Hindu Brothers to recognize this right of the Muslims” (Afzal, 1966: 43).

It was due to Jinnah’s efforts that the Indian National Congress accepted the Muslim claim that Muslim League is the only political party of the Muslims and separate electorates was recognized for them (Afzal, 1966: 50, 64).

A Staunch Muslim and Constitutionalist

As a constitutionalist Jinnah was not satisfied with the unconstitutional means of Non-Cooperation Movement of the Congress for the attainment of self-rule, so he quit the Congress in December 1920. From 1921 onwards Jinnah’s only interest was the development of Muslim League into a powerful Muslim organization. He was still trying his best to unite Hindus and Muslims for the attainment of self-government in India. He also emphasized the need to protect the rights of the Muslims in minority provinces. He was always in struggle to give religious freedom that is freedom of belief, worship to all nationalities particularly to the Muslims.

He was always struggling for the Muslim interests. He presented the Muslim demands in Delhi Proposals (1927) and again in his famous Fourteen Points (1929). He rejected the Nehru Report and said that it was nothing but only ‘parting of the ways.’ When in 1935 Jinnah returned to India after his self-imposed exile, he was made

president of the All India Muslim League. In those days the Muslims of Subcontinent were divided in small and rival provincial political groups. Quaid-i-Azam proved an angel of mercy for the Muslims at that critical time. He gave them a new hope of bright future. He always advised the Muslims to organize themselves under the flag of Muslim League (Ahmad, 1992: 216). Quaid-i-Azam was proud to be a Muslim. He said in August, 1939, “I was born a Muslim, I am a Muslim and I shall die a Muslim” (Ahmad, 1992: 216).

On July 26, 1937 soon after the Congress Ministries were installed in office, he told the Muslims to organize, consolidate and establish solidarity and unity (Ahmad, 1968: 25). In October 1937 while addressing the Muslim League Lucknow session, he said: “we must develop power and strength and again I entreat and implore that every man, woman and child should come forward to join the League and flood the ranks of the Muslim League hundreds and thousands as quickly as you can” (Pirzada, 1969: 265).

In a speech in February 1938, he assured his co-religionists of a ‘glorious future’ only if they were prepared to ‘save first of all Mussalmans and then the country.’ Again in December 1938, at Patna he appealed to the Muslims, even the Congress Muslims, ‘to join the League for their own benefit and the benefits of the entire Muslim Community’ (Pirzada, 1969: 310-11).

Muhammad Ali Jinnah proved to be a great leader of the Muslim Community and, in response, the Muslims gave him the title of ‘Quaid-i-Azam’. No doubt Quaid-i-Azam guided the Muslims towards their destiny. He rendered valuable and meritorious services to the cause of the Muslim Community. It was because of his brilliant leadership that Muslim League passed a resolution on March 23, 1940, known as the ‘Lahore Resolution’ in which the Muslims demanded a separate homeland for themselves. This historical resolution is a landmark in the history of Indo-Pakistan Sub-continent. It became a base for the foundation of an Islamic State, where Muslims could live according to the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah. The All-India

Muslim League achieved a historical victory over the Congress in the 1945-46 elections because of this resolution.

Perception of Islam

Muhammad Ali Jinnah was always non-sectarian in his approach towards Islam, through the reflection of his thoughts. He never showed his hostility towards any sect of the Muslims. He acted positively to all. As a representative of the Muslims he always worked for the promotion of Sunni cause—being the majority in Islam. (Ahmad, 1986: 17-18)

For him Islam carried spiritual value which should be implemented in the material life of the modern world. He was of the opinion that revolution could be brought by working honestly, sincerely, loyally and with integrity. In January 1938, he hinted at struggle made by our Holy Prophet (PBUH) in the propagation of Islam. He said:

“When the Holy Prophet (PBUH) started to preach Islam he was a minority of one in the world. By the force of his faith he challenged the whole universe and wrought the greater revolution in the shortest time in the world with the help of the Holy Quran. If the Muslim procures the power of that faith, organization, deceptive and sacrifice, they have no reason to fear the hostile forces of the entire world” (Ahmad, 1986: 213-14).

In December, 1943 at Karachi session of the Muslim League, the Quaid said: Islam was ‘the bed rock’ of the Muslim community. “Quran is the greatest book that is the sheet anchor of Muslim of the subcontinent. Being Muslims we believe in one God, one Qibla, one Prophet and one Nation” (Pirzada, 1969: 481).

Muhammad Sharif Toosi of Wazirabad a scholar and an educationist remained with Quaid-i-Azam for six months during his stay in Bombay. According to Toosi there were a lot of books on Seerat-un-Nabi [Urdu: Life of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)], Islamic

History and law and the four pious Caliphs in the library of Quaid-i-Azam. He read these books time and again. He was a man of principles. Not only friends but also his enemies professed his talent and ability (Mahmood, 2004: 43).

In a letter to Pir Manki Sharif in November 1945, the Quaid said: ‘it is pointless to stress that the constituent Assembly in which the majority would be Muslims and will impose Islamic laws (Waheed-uz-Zaman, 1985: 36). Further, in a meeting with Maulana Shabbir Ahmad Usmani in June 1947, the Quaid assured him that Islamic Constitution would be implemented in Pakistan (Waheed-uz-Zaman, 1985: 161).

As a Governor General of Pakistan, he appeared to be a democratic and constitutionalist, how was it possible for him to impose his own-made constitution in Pakistan. While addressing and put the purpose of creation of Pakistan to the forces officers at Khaliqdina Hall, Karachi, on October 11, 1947. He said:

“The establishment of Pakistan for which we have been striving for the last ten years is, by the grace of God, an established fact today, but the creation of a state of our own was means to an end not the end in itself. The idea was that we should have a state in which we could live and breathe as free men and which we could develop according to our own lights and Culture and where principles of Islamic social justice could find free-play”. (Dar, 2014: 122).

Quaid-i-Azam knew the true spirit of Islam. In Islam there is no dichotomy between theory and practice. What we believe, it should be given practical shape. He called upon every Mussalman to make his contribution for the best interest of Pakistan and work hard for the development of this state to make it great and strong. Addressing to a public gathering on October 30, 1947 in the University Stadium, Lahore, he said:

“If we take our inspiration and guidance from the Holy Quran, the final victory, I once again say, will be

ours....Our religion teaches us to be always prepared for death. We should face it bravely to save the honour of Pakistan and Islam. There is no better salvation for a Muslim than the death of a martyr for a righteous cause”. (Dar, 2014: 122-23).

Quaid-i-Azam knew the fact that through Islam Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) had accomplished a religio-political revolution in Arabia. He (PBUH) gathered the Arabs and made them a single community (Ummah). Quaid-i-Azam had a firm belief that with the introduction of Islamic democracy, problems of Indian Muslims and the whole Muslim “Ummah” could be solved. Real salvation of Muslims, he believed, was in following the Holy Prophet. On January 25, 1948 in his address to the Karachi Bar Association to pay honour to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) he said:

“Thirteen hundred years ago Prophet (PBUH) laid the foundation of democracy. The Prophet was a great teacher. He was a great law giver. He was great statesman. No doubt, there are many people who do not quite appreciate when we talk of Islam. Islam is not only a set of rituals, traditions and spiritual doctrines. Islam is also a code for Muslim which regulates his life and his conduct in even politics and economics and the like. One God and equality of man is one of the fundamental principles of Islam. The principles of equality, liberty and fraternity are the fundamental principles of Islam. “

Whatever I have done, I did as a servant of Islam, and only tried to perform my duty and made every possible contribution within my power to help our nation. We Mussalmans believe in one God, one Book—the Holy Quran and one Prophet. So we must stand as a Nation. You know the old saying that in unity lies strength; united we stand, divided we fall” (Ahmad, 1968: 488). Quaid was well aware of the financial problems of Pakistan. Once he said, ‘no independent country goes down for want of finance. I shall fight for every inch of my

country till I am lifted and thrown into the Arabian Sea beyond’(Ahmad, 1968: 57).

On July 1, 1948, this was his last public look. In inaugural speech Quaid rejected the western economic system.

“The economic system of the west has created almost insoluble problems for humanity and to many of us it appears that only a miracle can save it from the disaster that is now facing the world. It has failed to do justice between man and man and to eradicate friction from the international field. On the contrary, it was largely responsible for the two world wars in the last half century. The western world, in spite of its advantages of mechanization and industrial efficiency is today in a worse mess than ever before in history. The adoption of western economy theory and practice will not help us in achieving our goal of creating a happy and satisfied people” (Ahmad, 1968: 567)

Quaid-i-Azam knew that the month of Ramazan has a great lesson for all the Muslims. He appealed his nation not to hesitate to sacrifice their lives for the cause of Pakistan. On October 24, 1947, in his Eid-ul-Azha message to the nation, he said:

“God often tests and tries those whom He loves. He called upon Prophet Ibrahim to sacrifice the object he loved most. Ibrahim answered the call and offered to sacrifice his son. Today too, God is testing and trying the Muslims of Pakistan and India. He has demanded great sacrifices from us. Our new-born State is bleeding from wounds inflicted by our enemies...for I am sure, if we show the same spirit of sacrifice as was shown by Ibrahim, God would rend the clouds and shower on us His blessing as he did on Ibrahim”.

Two-Nation Theory

‘Two-Nation Theory was the only wall between Gandhi and Jinnah’ (Waheed-uz-Zaman, 1986: 13). ‘It was a clash of two strong personalities; ideologies and it were these differences which were to dictate the course of the pen that wrote the history of Subcontinent’ (Allana, 1967: 106). In his letter to Mr. Gandhi, on January 1, 1940, ‘Quaid-i-Azam explained the Two-Nation Theory in these words, ‘India is not a nation, nor a country. In sub-continent there were different nationalities’ (Ahmad, 1968: 132). Once again in a letter to Mr. Gandhi on September 17, 1944, Quaid wrote:

“We maintain and hold that Muslims and Hindus are two major nations by any definition or test of a nation. We are nation of a hundred million, and what is more, we are a nation with our own distinctive culture and civilization, language and literature, art and architecture, names and nomenclature, sense of value and proportion, legal laws and moral codes, customs and calendar, history and traditions, aptitude and ambitions. In short, we have our own distinctive outlook on life. By all canon of international law we are a nation”. (Ahmad, 1968: 103)

Quaid-i-Azam was a staunch believer of Two-Nation Theory and considered the Muslims a separate and distinct nation. He said to the students of Muslim University Union, Aligarh, on March 6, 1940, ‘One thing is now obvious that we are by no means a minority but a solid and distinct nation by ourselves with a destiny of our own.... I was told that I was guilty of disservice to Islam because Islam believes in democracy. So far I have understood Islam; it does not advocate a democracy which would allow the majority of non-Muslim to decide the fate of the Muslims while rejecting the western type of democracy. (Ahmad, 1968: 147-48).

Pakistan Movement was started from the Lahore Resolution of 1940. Quaid presided over this highly important and significant meeting of the Muslim League. He delivered a historic address at this

moment highlighting the separate and distinct national character of the Muslims of India. While addressing the session, Quaid said:

“It is extremely difficult to appreciate why our Hindu friends fail to understand the real nature of Islam and Hinduism. They are not religions in the strict sense of the word, but are, in fact different and distinct social orders ...To yoke together two such nations under a single state, one as a numerical minority and the other as a majority, must lead to growing discontent and the final destruction of any fabric that may be so built up for the government of such a state”. (Ahmad, 1968: 337, 339) .

Therefore, the Quaid believed that India should be divided into Hindu India and Muslim India. He said that ‘democracy worked in country where there is one nation and one society’ (Ahmad, 1968: 249).

Quaid-i-Azam cleared the Muslim nationhood in tangible terms on July 1, 1942 to American Press representatives at Bombay. He said:

“The difference between the Hindus and the Muslims is deep-rooted and ineradicable. We are a nation with our own distinctive culture and civilization, language and literature, art and architecture, names and nomenclature, sense of values and proportion, legal laws and moral codes, customs and calendar, history and traditions, aptitude and ambitions, in short, we have our own distinctive outlook on life and of life. By all canons of International Law we are a nation” (Ahmad, 1968: 405).

Quaid-i-Azam knew that why Hindus were asking, ‘Let me’ he told in November 1942 to Hindus ‘live according to my history in the light of Islam, my tradition, culture and language, and you the same in your zones. In a speech in December, 1942, he said:

“Neither the Government of India nor the British Government can divert us from our goal—Pakistan which is now an article of faith with us...No greater happiness can come to me if I can see it established in my lifetime.... I can give you nothing except my service. I shall continue my service of the Mussalmans and Islam”. (Ahmad, 1968: 476-77).

Quaid-i-Azam gave a forceful impetus to the freedom movement of Pakistan. He said that ‘to achieve Pakistan is our right. This is mandatory for us. I shall live and die for Pakistan. When the time comes we will sacrifice everything even my life. I will be ahead of my nation for the first bullet (Ahmad, 1968: 218)’.

Pakistan, the Quaid-i-Azam remarked on March 8, 1944, “Was not the product of the conduct or misconduct of Hindus. It had always been there; only they were not conscious of it...” Tracing the history of the beginning of Islam in India, he proved that “Pakistan started the moment the first non-Muslim was converted to Islam in India long before the Muslims established their rule. As soon as a Hindu embraced Islam he was outcast not only religiously but also socially, culturally and economically. As for the Muslim, it was a duty imposed on him by Islam not to merge his identity and individuality in any alien society. Throughout the ages Hindus had remained Hindus and Muslims had remained Muslims, and they had not merged their entities—that was the basis for Pakistan” (Ahmad, 1968: 2).

In his message to a public meeting in January 1945 he said, ‘no power on earth can prevent us from realizing the goal of Pakistan if we are united and determined, and I am confident we shall succeed sooner than many people expect’ (Ahmad, 1968: 166).

Quaid-i-Azam proved the Muslims as a separate nation. He wanted a separate Muslim state for the Indian Muslims. In his interview on November 1, 1945, to the Associated Press of America, Quaid once again showed the difference between the Hindus and Muslims. He said:

“Congress Hindu leaders speak of unity and brotherhood with Muslims in a United India, but they would not eat our food and if a Hindu shook hands with a Muslim, he would wash his hands thereafter. We (the Hindus and Muslims) are different in everything. We differ in our religion, our civilization and culture, our history, our language, our architecture, music, jurisprudence and laws, our food and our society, our dress—in every way we are different. We cannot get together only in the ballot-box”. (Ahmad, 1968: 228-29).

Clarifying the aim and objective of the creation of Pakistan he said in a speech at the Frontiers Muslim League in November, 1945, ‘the Muslims demanded Pakistan, where they could rule according to their own code of life and according to their own cultural growth, traditions and Islamic laws’ (Ahmad, 1968: 237). Quaid-i-Azam was, no doubt the greatest Muslim political leader that the Subcontinent had produced and surely came as a Divine gift to the submerged Muslim masses. Some people misinterpret Quaid’s 11th August speech to the Constitution Assembly and offer it as an argument to prove that he neglected the Two-Nation Theory (Waheed-uz-Zaman. 1985: 39). That he wished to form Pakistan into a secular state. In this speech, Quaid gives a lesson to his people to be equal citizens of the State. He says that ‘Muslims and non-Muslims all are equal citizens of the state’. Even before the creation of Pakistan he, struggled for the minority’s rights and interest. Again in November 1941, he said that in ‘Islam there is equal rights and protection for all in the state’. He cleared that minorities would be their first class citizen brothers (Ahmad, 1968: 326).

It does not mean that he wanted a secular Pakistan. It is an indubitable fact that he created Pakistan on the name of Islam. We cannot forget his services which he rendered to the cause of Muslims and difficulties which he suffered for the achievement of his goal. His sister Fatima Jinnah was great admirer of her brother and paid tribute to him in these words:

“You should never forget the difficulties and obstacles the Quaid-i-Azam had to face in the achievement and later on, in laying the foundation of Pakistan, so that it may live forever. He was successful in both, but at the cost of his life. Quaid-i-Azam lived so that Pakistan may come into being; he died that Pakistan may live”. (Shahid, 1983: 2014).

Indeed he is the father of the nation. He is the Founder of Pakistan, and in the words of our National Poet Dr. Allama Iqbal: “*Utray Maseeh ban kay Muhammad Ali Jinnah*” [Muhammad Ali Jinnah proved to be savior of the Muslims]. The then president of the All-India Jamiyat al Ulama-i-Islam, Maulana Shabbir Ahmad Usmani, compared the Quaid’s struggle for Pakistan to the Holy Prophet’s (PBUH) migration from Makkah to establish an Islamic State in Madina, and he called Quaid-i-Azam, the head of the Muslim State of Pakistan (Sayyied, 1960: 203). In his last message to the Pakistani nation on the occasion of the first anniversary of Pakistan on August 14, 1948, the Quaid expressed his hope in the Islamic tone:

“Remember, that the establishment of Pakistan is a fact of which there is no parallel in the history of the world. It is one of the largest Muslim States of the world, and it is destined to play its magnificent part year after year, as we go on, provided we serve Pakistan honestly, earnestly and selflessly. I have full faith in my people that they will raise to every occasion worthy of our past Islamic history, glory and traditions”. (Ahmad, 1968: 571).

In the Subcontinent, the greatest favour that Allah bestowed upon them, and the Quaid-i-Azam, the instrument in His hands to fulfill His purpose, was their greatest benefactor. He was a great believer in Islam, and he envisaged an Islamic State where Muslims would have all opportunities to lead their lives according to the principles of Islamic democracy.

Conclusion

Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah was very clear about the Muslims of Indian sub-continent. He always spoke with sincerity in public meetings and never said anything without conviction and clarity and used the words very carefully. He opposed those laws which were against the Muslims rights. In his speeches and statements he always talked about Muslim identity. He played a leading role on the platform of All India Muslim League and passed a historic resolution which is called Pakistan resolution, on the basis of this resolution he achieved a separate identity to the Muslims. He aspired to leave this world with a clean conscience and content with the feeling that he had not betrayed the cause of Islam and the Muslims. He did not want any praise or any certificate. He only wanted that his heart, conscience and faith should prove at the time of his death that Jinnah died defending Islam and the cause of the Muslims.

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