

**IQBAL'S INFLUENCE ON JINNAH IN FAVOUR OF MUSLIM STATEHOOD JINNAH FORESAW PERILS TO MUSLIM UNDER HINDU CONGRESS RAJ**

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What transformed Mr. M. A. Jinnah from an "Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim Unity" in 1916 into an impassioned advocate of independent Muslim Statehood in the Subcontinent in 1940? This is a question, which is frequently raised by foreign students and scholars in moots and discussions on the Subcontinent's history and the future of its peoples. Four major factors for this metamorphosis in the political thinking and perception of Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah can be cited.

Firstly, Mr. Jinnah's bitter experience of Hindu intolerance in the Nagpur session of the Hindu-majority, Gandhi-dominated Congress in December 1920 when he was humiliated on the rostrum by pro-Gandhi zealots for calling their leader '*Mr. Gandhi*' instead of '*Mohatma Gandhi*'. Mr. Jinnah walked out of the meeting, with his wife, Ruttie Jinnah, and took the first train back to his hometown of Bombay. He was more than convinced that Mr. Gandhi disliked him as a strong political rival in the Congress Party and he wanted the Congress to be his undisputed bailiwick. Jinnah withdrew from the Congress.

Secondly, Mr. Jinnah felt disappointed and disillusioned by the Hindu mindset vis a vis the Muslims of India in the 1930 and 1931 Round Table Conferences he attended in London on the invitation of the British Government to chart India's constitutional future. Mr. Gandhi's publicity-seeking antics such as his sartorial abridgement, working on the spinning wheel in public and drinking goat's milk and his claim that he spoke for the whole of India surprised Mr. Jinnah in the Second Round Table Conference in London. (To the Third Round Table Conference in London neither

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Mr. Gandhi, nor Mr. Jinnah was invited). Thirdly, Mr. Jinnah now found eminent merit in poet and philosopher, Allama Iqbal's thesis of Muslim separatism in India.

Mr. Jinnah was attending the First Round Table Conference in London in 1930-31 when Allama Iqbal delivered his historic address in the Allahabad session of the All India Muslim League in December 1930 in which he demanded the establishment of a Muslim State, either within or outside the British Empire, at least in the north-western Muslim-majority part of the Subcontinent. At that time Mr. Jinnah did not comment on Iqbal's powerful drumbeat of independent Muslim statehood in the Subcontinent. But when Allama Iqbal had long sessions with Mr. Jinnah in London during his participation in the Second and Third Round Table Conference, Mr. Jinnah began to appreciate the reasons and rationale of Dr. Iqbal's demand for a Muslim State in the Subcontinent. Stands of unity in the political thinking of the two great Muslim Leaders of the Sub-continent began to emerge. Allama Iqbal did play a significant role in persuading Mr. Jinnah to return from England to lead the Muslims of India as President of the Muslim League in 1934-35. Until Allama Iqbal's death in 1938, Mr. Jinnah leaned heavily on his advice and counsel in building up the Muslim League and in dealing with national issue that concerned the wellbeing of Muslim India.

Fourthly, Mr. Jinnah was truly shocked and infuriated by the injustices and wrongs heaped on the Muslims in seven out of India's eleven provinces in which the Hindu-majority Congress ruled from the summer of 1937 to the autumn of 1939 due to its electoral victory in the 1937 General Elections held under the 1935 British-framed Government of India Act. He was also aware of the vicious intrigues of the Congress and its surrogates to prevent the installation of Muslim League ministries in the Muslim-majority provinces. The Muslim League's Pirpur Committee report late in 1938, which catalogued the injustices inflicted on the Muslims in the Congress-ruled provinces, was an eye-opener for Mr. Jinnah.

He was utterly surprised by the "double standards" of the British rulers in wooing the Hindu-majority Congress. Like a statesman gifted with the sixth sense to peer into the womb of the future, Mr. Jinnah foresaw the grave perils to India's Muslims under Hindu-majority Congress rule in a united India. The warning of these perils, which Allama Iqbal gave to Mr. Jinnah in powerful epistles before his death in April 1938, now made sense to the Quaid-i-Azam. For the first time, the thought of the Partition of the Subcontinent into two independent Muslim and Hindu States took roots in Mr. Jinnah's political strategy. It was reflected in the resonant call for Partition that rang out from the Muslim League's session in Karachi under Mr. Jinnah's presidentship in October 1938. It paved the way for the Muslim League's history-making session in Lahore on March 22-24, 1940 when the partition of the Subcontinent in order to create independent Muslim-majority States in the North West and the Eastern region was enshrined in the Lahore Resolution (which a year later gained currency as the Pakistan Resolution). Seven and a half years later, the Muslim-majority State of Pakistan was established with Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah, as its first Governor General, on August 14, 1947.

Ten months before his death, Allama Iqbal thus wrote to Mr. Jinnah on June 23, 1937, when the Hindu Congress, under Mr. M. K. Gandhi and Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru, was forming its provincial Ministries in seven out of India's eleven provinces: "A separate Federation of Muslim provinces . . . is the only course by which we can secure a peaceful India and save the Muslims from the domination of non-Muslims. Why should not the Muslims of North West India and Bengal be considered as nations entitled to self-determination . . . ?

In the Muslim League's Allahabad session on December 29, 1930, Allama Iqbal had said in his presidential address: "I would like to see the Punjab, North West Frontier Province, Sindh and Balochistan formed into a single State . . . Self-government within the British Empire or without the British Empire, the formation of

a consolidated North-West Indian Muslim State appears to be the final destiny of the Muslims, at least of the North West India". (Today's Pakistan resembles what Allama Iqbal had envisioned as the consolidated Muslim State in the North West India in 1930). It appears that when Mr. Jinnah and Dr. Iqbal met in 1931 in London for the Second Round Table Conference, he explained to Mr. Jinnah at considerable length his vision of a consolidated Muslim State in India's North West. Like Mr. Jinnah, Dr. Iqbal, in the formative years of his life, also believed in Hindu-Muslim unity to gain independence for enslaved India. But, with the passage of years, when he saw the Muslims being short-changed by the Congress Hindu leadership, he became an advocate of Muslim separatism and the harbinger of a separate Muslim State in the Subcontinent.

Iqbal's appeal to Mr. Jinnah to lead the Muslims of India was in these powerful words: ". . . you are the only Muslim in India today to whom the Muslim community has a right to look up to for safe guidance through the storm which is coming to North West India and perhaps to whole of India". In Mr. Jinnah, Iqbal had found the most suitable leader to lead India's Muslim in the perilous time they were passing through then. Three months before his death in April 1938, when Muslim grievances against Congress rule in seven provinces were surfacing in the media, Dr. Iqbal declared in a statement: "Muslims should strengthen Jinnah's hands. They should join the Muslim League. The Indian question, as is now being solved, can be countered by our united front against both the Hindus and the English. Without it our demands are not going to be accepted. These demands relate to our national existence . . ."

On March 23, 1940, when more than 100,000 Muslims, attending the Lahore session of the Muslim League, adopted and hailed the Lahore Resolution - the charter of independent Muslim Statehood in the Subcontinent - Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah looked in the direction of Allama Iqbal's tomb, not far from

the Minto Park (now Minar-e-Pakistan) and declared how happy Iqbal's soul in the Heavens would be that the Muslims had now done what he had wanted them to do a decade earlier? In 17 years, Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah made Allama Iqbal's dream state a reality for the Subcontinent's Muslims. Mr. Jinnah was a great admirer of Allama Iqbal's inspirational poetry and his deep understanding of Islam as reflected in his work, *the Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, a collection of his lectures on Islam.

In the early 1980s, when I was serving as Minister at the Pakistan Embassy in London, Mr. Jinnah's chauffeur during his London years, Bradbury, told me that in 1931-32, when Dr. Iqbal came to England for the Round Table Conference, the two leaders had long conversations in Mr. Jinnah's Law . . . chamber and in his home in Hampstead. As Mr. Jinnah did not participate in the Third Round Table Conference, Dr. Iqbal called on Mr. Jinnah to inform him about the proceedings and took his advice on constitutional issues, especially those affecting Muslims in India. Obviously a strong rapport was built up between the two Muslim leaders in their London parleys. When Mr. Jinnah returned to India and began reorganizing the All India Muslim League as its President in 1935, he went to Lahore specially to meet Dr. Iqbal and consulted him on his plans to give the party a populist and popular base. But even at that time Mr. Jinnah's effort was to develop a friendly relationship with the Congress in the pursuit of independence for India. Both Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Nehru virtually spurned Mr. Jinnah's offer and denigrated the Muslim League. Dr. Iqbal was not surprised at the negative response from the Congress leadership to Mr. Jinnah's friendly overtures. Mr. Jinnah now felt increasingly convinced by Allama Muhammad Iqbal's argument that under an inevitably Hindu-dominated Central Government in a federal set-up stemming from the British-framed Government of India Act of 1935, the Muslims would naturally feel endangered by the steamroller of Hindu majority rule. In December 1933, Dr. Iqbal had thus retorted to Mr. Nehru's fulminations against non-Congress Muslim leaders: "How is India's problem to be solved if

the majority community (Hindus) will neither concede the minimum safeguards necessary for the protecting of a minority of 80 million people (Muslims) nor accept the awards of a Third Party but continue to talk of nationalism which works out only to its own benefit?" Mr. Muhammad Ali Jinnah saw Dr. Muhammad Iqbal's rejoinder to Mr. Nehru and appreciated the logic of his argument.

When a book containing the correspondence exchanged between Mr. Jinnah and Dr. Iqbal was published in 1944, Mr. Jinnah said in his introduction that before Dr. Iqbal's death in April 1938, he had agreed with him regarding the establishment of a State for Muslims in the Subcontinent. Mr. Jinnah wrote: "His (Iqbal's) views were substantially in consonance with my own and finally led me to the same conclusions as a result of careful examination and study of the constitutional problems facing India and found expression in due course in the united will of Muslim India as adumbrated in the Lahore Resolution of the All India Muslim League, popularly known as the Pakistan Resolution, passed on 23 March, 1940".

Mr. Jinnah's immense respect and regard for Allama Iqbal and an acknowledgement of the influence the Poet-Philosopher wielded over him were amplified in the statement of condolence and personal grief he issued on Dr. Iqbal's death in April 1938. Mr. Jinnah said: "Iqbal was a remarkable poet of worldwide fame and his work will live for ever. His services to his country and the Muslims are so numerous that his record can be compared with that of the greatest Indian that ever lived. He was the staunchest and the most loyal champion of the policy and programme of the All India Muslim League. To me, he was a friend, guide and philosopher, and during the darkest moments through which the Muslim League had to go, he stood like a rock and never flinched for one single moment".

The correspondence exchanged between Mr. Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Dr. Muhammad Iqbal shows the tremendous respect

they had for each other and Mr. Jinnah's willingness to solicit and accept advice from Dr. Iqbal on vital national issues and organizational matters relating to the Muslim League. Every word that flowed from their pen and had dignity, wisdom and a passionate regard for Muslim interests. On matters relating to the Punjab in particular, Mr. Muhammad Jinnah invariably sought Dr. Muhammad Iqbal's advice.

Mr. Jinnah's plea for the solidarity of the Muslim countries and peoples echoed, in more ways than one, Dr. Iqbal's impassioned calls for Muslim renaissance and the unity of the global Islamic community (*the Ummah*). During a visit to Cairo in December 1946 and his meetings with the Egyptian leaders and the Grand Mufti of Palestine, Mr. Jinnah called on the Muslim *Ummah* to support the Pakistan demand of the Muslims in India. He responded positively to the suggestion of Nahas Pasha, head of the Egyptian *Wafd* Party, for an Association of Muslim countries and peoples. Mr. Jinnah, all through his political career, was a vociferous champion of the right of the Palestinian people to have their own independent State in Palestine and in 1948 he condemned in strong words the injustice inflicted on the Palestinian people by the UN's partitioning of Palestine to create the Zionist State of Israel. As Pakistan's Governor-General, Mr. Jinnah made it a foundational ingredient of its foreign policy that it would fearlessly support the freedom struggle of subjugated Muslim peoples against colonial rule. This is exactly what Allama Iqbal would have liked Pakistan to do had he been alive. By all tokens with which greatness is measured, Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah was indeed the greatest Muslim statesman of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and in creating Pakistan, Allama Iqbal's inspiration influenced him considerably.