

## THE REASONS OF A SEPARATE HOMELAND FOR MUSLIMS OF INDIA

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The demand for the creation of a separate Muslim State in the sub-continent of India and Pakistan was essentially based on the two-nation theory which materialised in August 1947 under the dedicated and inspiring leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah. An attempt will be made in this article to pinpoint the reasons behind the articulation of this demand.

The Quaid-e-Azam is reported to have remarked in 1947 that Pakistan was born when the first Muslim landed on the soil of the sub-continent. A capsule analysis of the basic tenets of Islam will prove that the Muslims of India and Pakistan sub-continent were bound to keep their cultural and spiritual identities intact and consequently their separate nationhood. Islamic culture was the crucible of ancient cultures. All those people who recite Kalemā (there is no God but One and Muhammad (peace be on him) is His prophet) comprise one Islamic brotherhood which transcends national frontiers. A Muslim believes that an individual is the viceregent of God in the world and he has to submit to the law of God. Thus to him the government is divine agency. To a follower of Islam religion provides him with a complete code of life as distinct from the followers of other religions. Indeed Islam penetrates into the purely personal being of man. Distinction between morality and law in Islam is reduced to a minimum. Islam thus is a totalist religion but not a totalitarian one.

Moreover, the Islamic Society is not merely a geographical expression. It is an exclusivist one. For a Muslim society is merely a school to grow into heroes and saints. Islam, therefore, recognises two distinct nations; one, that believes and acts according to the injunction of the Holy Quran and the other that rejects the Holy Quran, and is regarded as infidel. A Muslim is enjoined upon to sacrifice everything for his religion. He is forbidden to obey a non-Muslim for Holy Quran says, "O Prophet keep thy duty to Allah and obey not the disbelievers and the hypocrites."

When the Muslims first came to India they found the contemporary society dominated by Hinduism which subscribed to values quite different from the new-comers. The other two indigenous religions were, Buddhism and Jainism which preached complete renunciation of this transitory world. Hinduism laid too much stress on the world henceafter and considered the creation of man as sin. Moreover, with the passage of time the caste-system became more rigid and the Hindu Society being fragmented on a pyramidal structure from Brahmans to un-touchables. This ingroup concentrated society provided no alternative to Muslims to work in unison. The gulf dividing them became more and more pronounced because of the reluctance of Muslims to assimilate completely with Hindu Society based on the philosophy of separatism. The Aryans, in course of time, completely forgot their place of origin and merged themselves with the Indian Society. As against this, the Muslims of this sub-continent throughout their 1200 years of history always maintained spiritual affinities with their co-religionists throughout the world and continued to make visits to their Holy places, Mecca and Madina.

Mr. Nirad Choudhri, an eminent Indian writer, in his book 'The Continent of Circe' has aptly described the Hindu character thus: "Every Hindu is divided against himself, and it would seem throughout his historical existence he has been. The human personality is indeed contradictory everywhere, but normally one set of traits can push their opposites into back-ground and become dominant. But with the Hindus the opposites almost neutralize one another, and the indecisive tug-of-war stultifies all their actions".<sup>1</sup> The Moghul Emperor, Akbar tried to integrate Hindus and Muslims, into one nation by founding a new religion, 'Din-e-Illahi'. He himself married Hindu Princesses and appointed Hindus to high posts in his Empire. But this effort of integration failed as his new creed did not attract even his courtiers. When Emperor Aurangzeb tried to retract from Akbar's one-nation theory, there was violent opposition from the Hindus, specially the Marhattas, personified in their hero, Shivaji. Moreover, during this whole period Muslim saints like Mujjadid Alf-Sani and Shah Waliullah continued to emphasize upon the distinctness of Muslim culture. Even the first War of Independence of 1857 failed because majority of Hindus had forsaken their leader, Bahadur-Shah Zafar, the last Moghul Emperor.

With the transfer of power into British hands in 1858, the new rulers tried laboriously to integrate the two nations, Muslims and Hindus, but the separateness of the dominant Hindu Society hamstrung all their efforts. The eminent Indian historian, Dr. Beni Prasad in his book *Hindu-Muslim Question* rightly observes that: "Hindus and Muslims were going beyond the last thousand years of rapprochement, back to distant and divergent traditions and heroes and therefore further away from one another in some important spheres of life." <sup>2</sup>

The same view is shared by an American writer Joseph Korbel when he observes that "The objective manifestation of oneness seems never more to have achieved on the sub-continent, the spiritual synthesis that is perhaps the enduring quality of a national allegiance". <sup>3</sup> After 1858 the Hindus were quick to realise the importance of Western educational system while the Muslims continued to boycott it. The English constitutional systems based as it was on democratic institutions gave the Hindus the idea that when the Britishers would leave the sub-continent the power would be transferred to them because of their numerical majority. The gradual introduction of self-government with the implementation of Lord Ripon's Reforms in 1880s gave the Muslims a clear notion of Hindu domination and intolerances and further strengthened their conviction that their spiritual and cultural identities would not be safe in case of eventual transfer of power to the Hindu dominated India. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan has referred to this lurking fear in several of his speeches.

Lord Curzon's Scheme of the partition of Bengal in 1905 was opposed tooth and nail by the Hindu dominated Indian National Congress. This violent Hindu agitation was a great eye opener for the Muslims of India. They reacted immediately in two ways: firstly, the organization of a deputation of prominent Muslims of India under the Agha Khan to meet the Viceroy, Lord Minto, in Simla in October 1906 to press their demand of separate electorates and secondly, the foundation of the All India Muslim League at Dacca in December 1906 to safeguard their vital interests. The acceptance of the demand of Simla deputationists for the separate electorates by Lord Minto was tantamount to the acceptance of two nation theory and the historic Lahore Resolution of March 23, 1940 was its logical conclusion. Speaking in the House of Lords, Lord Morley, the Secretary of State for India said: "The

difference between Mohammedans and Hindus is not a mere difference of articles of religious faith or dogma. It is difference in life, in tradition, in history, in all social things as well as articles of belief that constitute a community." <sup>4</sup>

Quaid-e-Azam's efforts to bring together the Hindu dominated Indian National Congress and the All India Muslim League in Lucknow in 1916 failed because of the Hindu mentality. The subsequent events had proved the futility of one nation theory. The Dyarchy Scheme (1919), the Khilafat Movement, the communal riots, the Unity conferences, Simon Commission 1927 and the Nehru Report convinced the India Muslims that it was impossible for them to live in a united India. The reaction of the Quaid-e-Azam to the Nehru Report was his famous Fourteen Points of 1929. Allama Iqbal represented the sentiments of the majority of the Indian Muslims when he presented on December 29, 1930 at the Allahabad Session of the All India Muslim League the concept of a separate homeland for Muslims of India. He observed that "The principle of European democracy cannot be applied to India without recognising the facts of communal groups. The Muslim demand for the creation of a Muslim India within India, is therefore, perfectly justified." <sup>5</sup>

Allama Iqbal's eyes were looking for a towering Muslim political personality who could unite the frustrated and disjointed Muslim nation after the death of Maulana-Mohammad Ali. He requested the Quaid-e-Azam to return from England and assume their leadership, which he did in 1934. He found the Muslim nation disorganised and divided into petty local factions. For five long years the Quaid devoted himself on the work of the reorganization of the Muslim League. The anti Muslim policies pursued by the power-drunk Congress Ministries in Hindu majority provinces between 1937-1939 dealt a fatal blow to the concept of United India. Various proposals were already in the air regarding their survival. Choudhry Rahmat Ali's proposal of 1933 for a Muslim state in India which he called Pakistan was a definite move in this direction. The Sind provincial Muslim League in its Karachi session of 1938 first came out with a clearcut proposal for the creation of a Muslim state in India on the basis of the two nation theory. However, it was Quaid-e-Azam whose unflinching faith and bold leadership made it possible for the All India Muslim League to pass the historic Lahore

Resolution on March 23, 1940. He was in a real sense the architect of this Resolution. Mr. A.K. Fazlul-Haq of Bengal moved the following Resolution.

"Resolved that it is the considered view of this session of the All India Muslim League that no constitutional plan would be workable in this country or acceptable to the Muslims unless it is designed on the following basic principles, viz., that geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted, with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority as in the North-Western and Eastern Zones of India should be grouped to constitute 'Independent states' in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign".<sup>6</sup>

The Quaid-e-Azam was now a firm exponent of the two-nation theory and put his life and soul to realise the goal, which he set for the Muslim nation. Writing to Gandhiji in September 1944, the Quaid thus presented in clear words the rationale for a separate Muslim state in India: "We are a nation with our distinctive culture and civilisation, 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 aptitudes and ambitions, in short, we have our own distinctive outlook on life and of life".<sup>7</sup>

The Britishers tried their best to avoid the partition of India. However, gradually it became crystal clear to them that it was well-nigh impossible to force one hundred million Muslims into submission of sheer Hindu majority in a united India. When the last Viceroy of India, Lord Louis Mountbatten arrived in March 1947 to settle the vexed problem of Indian independence, the demand for the establishment of Pakistan was so articulate and strong that both the British Government and the Congress had to give their futile harping on United India. The Mountbatten plan of June 3, 1947 for the division of India into two independent states, India and Pakistan and its acceptance by the Congress was the culmination of the struggle of Indian Muslims to carve out a separate homeland for themselves. Thus Pakistan became a reality on August 14, 1947.

**References**

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