

PAKISTAN

Creation and Genesis

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Abstract: Pakistan's emergence on the world map on 14th August 1947, the culminating point of the demand of the Muslims of the sub-continent for their separate homeland, was not only a major event but a unique phenomenon. Though these were times when waves of freedom were sweeping across the globe, and many countries gained independence both before and after Pakistan's coming into being, the case of Pakistan is unique: it was an 'idea' or 'ideology' that the people espoused and struggled for. While a number of people – statesmen and scholars – and factors – the Muslim rule, Hindu-Muslim relations, Muslim identity and their being a 'large' majority, etc. – contributed to the evolution of this idea, the contribution of Iqbal and Jinnah, and of Syed Ahmad Khan before them, is extraordinary for they not just expounded the idea clearly but translated into reality successfully. It is by examining their views, this analysis holds, that one can understand the reasons of Muslims' clamor for their own homeland in the sub-continent, and what type of country they wanted it to be, along with the place of Pakistan in the comity of nations.

Introduction

The emergence of Pakistan towards the end of the first half of the twentieth century on the world map is a historic event. Those who participated in the Pakistan movement, or sympathized with the idea of distinct Muslim identity and the need to protect and preserve it, would assert that Pakistan was the 'product' of the circumstances and a response to the aspirations of the Muslim population of the sub-continent. But those who either stood for a united India or did not see the need for a separate state for Muslims for the protection of their identity or promotion of their values viewed its creation as 'temporary madness' and 'aberration' of history.

Here, we would look into the circumstances that led to the demand for a separate state for the Muslims. Also, the many questions that have been raised not only since the coming into being of Pakistan but, in fact, since the days of Pakistan movement would also be examined. Questions about the Pakistan movement: Why Muslims were after all agitating, and what for? What made them call for a 'different constitutional arrangement'? Were not there chances of reconciliation between the leaderships of Hindu and Muslim populations, or, more truly, was it because the leaders of the two major communities could not reconcile with each other? Then, questions about the nature and objectives of this state: Was Pakistan to be a state for Muslims, or an 'Islamic state'? Did Jinnah wish a theocracy or a democracy? What the founding fathers of this new state thought of relations with the Muslim and non-Muslim world, especially India? And, very briefly, is antagonism between India and Pakistan to last forever, or is it only a 'temporary madness' and 'frenzied reaction' to the creation of Pakistan that has bedeviled the relations between the two countries?

In order to understand the circumstances that led to the demand and ultimate creation of Pakistan, it is useful to find out the views of the leaders of the Muslim people who faced these circumstances, analyzed them, and shaped them to define the destiny of their people. Among these luminaries, three are most prominent: Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, founder of the Aligarh University who examined the causes of Muslim unrest of 1857 and championed their cause before the English rulers; Muhammad Ali Jinnah, founder of

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Pakistan who first had championed Hindu-Muslim unity but led the movement for Pakistan after being disillusioned about Hindu leaders' intentions; and Sir Muhammad Iqbal, the poet, the philosopher, the politician, who attempted to secure Muslims' identity and rights within the British India but, like Jinnah, was convinced of the futility of such endeavors and, subsequently, gave expression to the aspirations of Muslims by calling for a separate homeland for them.

This is not to deny the contribution of other luminaries. But, these three stand taller for their instrumental role in giving shape to an idea. More importantly, they did succeed in their endeavor. Their distinct position is perhaps also because they 'pro-acted' in meeting the challenge, while others 'reacted' to the emerging situation. Products of circumstances no doubt they were, but they also shaped events and people's destiny more than others did.

On the other side of the discourse are those Muslim leaders who opposed division of British India. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad is most prominent in this regard. His position is formidable to be reckoned with, but so were the views of his fellows in the Congress. These leaders did not represent Muslim sentiments and, therefore, could not stem the tide of Pakistan movement. As for Unionists and their likes, suffice is to say that they were a segment of Muslim population who wanted to secure their interests in any future setup; they did not, in any way, affect the course of the demand of Pakistan.

A dig into the views, and how they evolved over a long stretch of time, of Syed Ahmad Khan, Iqbal and Jinnah, therefore, gives an insight and true understanding of the causes that culminated in the emergence of Pakistan. So, our analysis should be interspersed with their observations, assertions, and statements on important occasions.

Pakistan's Creation: Aberration or Culmination?

Independence of Pakistan and India in 1947 has been projected differently by historians. Whereas Pakistanis tend to emphasize the injustices and discrimination that made separation necessary, Indian historians tend to regard Pakistan as partly the product of British imperial strategy, not the result of a legitimate demand.

It is a misnomer that the creation of Pakistan was an accident in history, that it was helped by a supportive British government in order to leave a colonial legacy behind. The fact, however, is that the struggle of Indian Muslims for achieving an independent homeland for themselves, in simultaneously fighting against the British colonists and overwhelming opposition of the Hindu majority in India, is one of the most glorious chapters of vision, action and achievement in the history of freedom movements.

It is not the demand for creation of a separate country for the Muslims of the sub-continent that is surprising, in the wake of glaring differences between the two major communities of Hindus and Muslims, rather what is amazing is that they lived together for about 1,000 years. They lived quite peacefully during the Muslim rule – before which Hindustan was not a country, but a conglomerate of many states and territories.

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It was their different aspects on life and about life that kept them apart even though they were physically together, living in the same localities or each other's vicinity. Much before the demand for Pakistan, Alberuni, the noted Central Asian scholar, who studied Hindu religion and civilization in India for several years, had found that

...the Hindus differed from the Muslims "in every respect... we believe in nothing in which they believe, and *vice versa*... their fanaticism is directed against all foreigners. They call them *mlecca*, i.e., impure, and forbid having any connection with them, be it by intermarriage or any other kind of relationship, or by sitting, eating, and drinking with them, because thereby, they think, they would be polluted."¹

This is what Muhammad Ali Jinnah, said in his historic address at a mass meeting in Lahore on March 23, 1940, that set forth the logic of Pakistan:

The Hindus and Muslims belong to two different religious philosophies, social customs, and literatures. They neither intermarry, nor inter-dine together and, indeed, they belong to two different civilizations which are based mainly on conflicting ideas and conceptions. Their aspects on life and of life are different. It is quite clear that Hindus and Musalmans derive their inspiration from different sources of history. They have different epics, their heroes are different, and they have different episodes. Very often the hero of one is a foe of the other, and likewise, their victories and defeats overlap.²

These words echoed Alberuni's observation some 900 years earlier.

Though the leaders of the Indian National Congress, who stood for a united India, spoke lightly of Hindu-Muslim differences and ascribed them solely to the British policy of 'divide and rule', Jinnah believed:

Pakistan had 'started the moment the first non-Muslim converted to Islam...[because] as soon as a Hindu embraced Islam he was outcast not only religiously but also socially, culturally and economically... throughout the ages Hindus and Muslims had not merged their entities – that was the basis of Pakistan.'³

Hindu-Muslim Relations and the Roots of Two-Nation Theory

Jinnah, fondly called Quaid-e-Azam (great leader) by the Muslims of the sub-continent, was not 'carving' or 'crafting' something, he was just giving expression to a reality that existed. In the words of contemporary scholar Stephen Cohen:

¹ Alberuni's India, pp 19,22

² Stephen Philip Cohen, The Idea of Pakistan, p 28

³ S.M. Burke and Lawrence Ziring, Pakistan's Foreign Policy, p 4

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...great advocate of a distinctive Muslim Indian identity. ...Jinnah was the first world-class political figure produced by Pakistan – in this case, by the idea, not the state.⁴

After joining the secular Indian National Congress, he rose to a leading position as “the ambassador of Hindu-Muslim Unity”. ...He quit active politics in 1930 and went to London to practice law, but returned to India in 1934 to revitalize the Muslim League. Jinnah organized the campaign that compelled both the British and the Indian National Congress to concede to the demand for the state of Pakistan. He summarized his life’s struggle in the historic address on 23 March 1940.

Jinnah gave clear expression to the two-nation theory and said:

It has always been taken for granted mistakenly that the Musalmans are a minority. The Musalmans are not a minority. The Musalmans are a nation by any definition... What the unitary government of India for 150 years has failed to achieve cannot be realized by the imposition of a central federal government...except by means of armed forces... The problem in India is not of an inter-communal character but manifestly of an international one, and it must be treated as such... The Hindus and Muslims belong to two different civilizations which are based mainly on conflicting ideas and conceptions... 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 final destruction of any fabric that may be so built up for the government of such a State.

As far as Jinnah was concerned, “a thousand years of close contact, nationalities which are as divergent today as ever cannot at any time be expected to transform themselves into one nation merely by means of subjecting them to a democratic constitution. And, Jinnah added, Muslims were not even minorities as the term is “commonly known and understood,” since they were a majority in four of eleven British Indian provinces.⁵

In an interview to Reuters on 25 October 1947, Jinnah said:

...as for the two-nation theory, it is not a theory but a fact. The division of India is based on that fact and what is more, that fact has been proved beyond doubt by the ugly and deplorable events of the past two months and by the action of the Dominion of India in pulling out Hindus from Pakistan as their nationals. How then can it be said that there is one nation? ...show the reality which is that the Dominion of India is a Hindu State. Even a great Professor Dr. Gadgil says that a ‘Hindu State or more fully a federation of Hindu national States’ is the only proper description of the new Indian Union. And he says that to describe the Indian Union as a Hindu State is to bring out its dominant and most significant characteristic...⁶

⁴ Stephen Philip Cohen, *The Idea of Pakistan*, p 28

⁵ Stephen Philip Cohen, *The Idea of Pakistan*, p 37

⁶ Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah: *Speeches and Statements 1947-48*, p 83-84

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Jinnah turned the “two-nation” theory (the idea that India’s Muslims and Hindus constituted two “nations”, each deserving their own state) into an effective political movement.

The facts on which the two-nation theory was based were well-known to everyone including the British. The joint committee of Parliament on Indian constitutional reforms stated in 1934:

India is inhabited by many races...often as distinct from one another in origin, tradition and manner of life as are the nations of Europe. Two-thirds of its inhabitants profess Hinduism...over 77 millions are followers of Islam, and the difference between the two is not only of religion in the stricter sense but also of law and culture. They may be said, indeed, to represent two distinct and separate civilizations.⁷

British Prime Minister Attlee’s remarks during the debate in the House of Commons on 15 March 1946 on the Cabinet Mission’s visit to India also underscore the same reality. He said:

I am well aware that...I speak of a country containing congeries of races, religions and languages, and I know well the difficulties thereby created but these difficulties can only be overcome by Indians. We are mindful of the rights of the minorities.

Acknowledging the ethnic make-up of India and the rights of its minorities, he went on to say “on the other hand we cannot allow a minority to place a veto on the advance of a majority.” This invited Jinnah’s memorable remark in which he gave the simile of the spider inviting a fly to its parlor: “If the fly refuses, it is said a veto is being exercised and the fly is intransigent.”⁸

The Issue of Identity and the Game of Numbers

Muslims had maintained their distinct identity while living side by side with their Hindu fellows, the British intention to introduce representative institutions changed the scenario. In the words of Chaudhri Muhammad Ali, as long as effective power was in the hands of the British, conflicts between Hindus and Muslims were confined to cultural and social matters, but with the introduction of representative institutions, political questions came to occupy the center of attention.⁹

The implications of such a step were not lost on Muslim leaders. In a speech in the legislative council in way back in 1883, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan said:

In borrowing from England the system of representative institutions, it is of the greatest importance to remember those socio-political matters in which India is distinguishable from England. ...India, a continent in itself is inhabited by vast populations of different races and different creeds; the rigour of religious institutions has kept even neighbours apart; the system of caste is still dominant

⁷ Chaudhri Muhammad Ali, The Emergence of Pakistan, p 39

⁸ Chaudhri Muhammad Ali, The Emergence of Pakistan, p 52

⁹ Chaudhri Muhammad Ali, The Emergence of Pakistan, p 11

and powerful... The community of race and creed make the English people one and the same nation... In a country like India, where caste distinctions still flourish, where there is no fusion of the various races, where religious distinctions are still violent, where education in its modern sense has not made an equal or proportionate progress among all the section of the population, I am convinced that the introduction of the principle of election, pure and simple, for representation of various interests on the local boards and district councils would be attended with evils of greater significance than purely economic considerations... The larger community would totally override the interests of the smaller community and the ignorant public would hold Government responsible for introducing measures which might make differences of race and creed more violent than ever.¹⁰

Also, in the late nineteenth century the British began to examine more carefully the population they now ruled. Aware of the vast social differences in Indian society, they felt an obligation to protect its vulnerable segments and adopted the principle of separate electorates and quota systems, first for deprived Hindu castes – notably the “untouchables” and non-Hindu tribals. Then they acceded to Muslim demand for separate electorates.¹¹ The arrangement of separate electorates was inevitable and unavoidable as, in Jinnah’s picturesque and striking phrase, “Brother Gandhi has three votes, Brother Jinnah only one.” Gandhi also said, “How can one Muslim be equal to three Hindus?”

Allama Iqbal, too, in his own way propelled the idea of Pakistan forward as effectively as Jinnah or Sir Syed.

In the words of Stephen Cohen, “Caught between cultural conservatism and political reformism, his message was complex and subtle. He, too, began as an advocate of Hindu-Muslim unity. ...Iqbal turned the idea of a separate homeland for India’s Muslims into a mass movement.”

At first Iqbal did not advocate a separate country, but one or more distinct components in a federated India; if that was not possible, he declared in his 1930 presidential address to the Muslim League, then Indian Muslims should seek a completely separate state via “concreted political action”.¹²

Cry for Separate Homeland: The Last Option

It would not be an exaggeration to say that Muslim leaders exhausted all other options before making the demand for Pakistan. In the face of stubborn attitude of the Hindu-dominated Congress party, they were, however disillusioned and saw no prospect of two communities living peacefully within the borders of a single state. As Irtiza Husain says, “for meeting the new situation many suggestions, proposals and schemes were mooted, examined, discussed and discarded one after other as being unsatisfactory. It was only in

¹⁰ Chaudhri Muhammad Ali, *The Emergence of Pakistan*, p 11

¹¹ Stephen Philip Cohen, *The Idea of Pakistan*, p 25

¹² Stephen Philip Cohen, *The Idea of Pakistan*, p 29-30

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1940 that Muslim opinion almost unanimously rallied round Quaid-e-Azam and converged on one point that Pakistan was the answer to their problem.”¹³

In August 1940 Viceroy Lord Linlithgow made an offer to expand the Executive Council by including representatives of political parties and to set up a War Advisory Council. And, after the war, an Indian constitution-making body would be set up to devise a new constitution with due regard for the rights of the minorities. The British government was clear “they could not contemplate transfer of their present responsibilities for the peace and welfare of India to any system of government whose authority is directly denied by large and powerful elements in India’s national life. Nor could they be parties to the coercion of such elements into submission to such a government.” They hoped that cooperation for victory in war would “pave the way towards the attainment by India of that free and equal partnership in the British Commonwealth which remains the proclaimed and accepted goal of the Imperial Crown and of the British Parliament.” Gandhi’s assertion in this regard is both astounding and explaining of the Hindu-dominated Congress party’s policy *summum bonum*:

The British Government would not ask for a common agreement, if they recognized any one party to be strong enough to take delivery. ...If [the Congress] does not weaken and has enough patience, it will develop sufficient strength to take delivery. It is an illusion created by ourselves that we must come to an agreement with all parties before we can make any progress.¹⁴

Sensing anti-Muslim bias of the Congress party and the likelihood of Hindu raj in any scheme pressing majoritarianism, Muslim leaders insisted on a different constitutional arrangement. They pressed for separate electorates, which the British accepted in order to protect the interests as well as elicit support of the significant minority, especially during the world war.

On the important factors that led to the formation of the Muslim League and its role in galvanizing Muslim masses support, renowned historian Lawrence Ziring writes: “Muslim League insistence on separate electorates intertwined with the 1905 partition of Bengal, and the violent reaction registered to that decision by Hindu militants... Bengal had become an administrative nightmare, and it was with the intention of improving official workways that the scheme to rearrange its administrative character gained the attention of Lord Curzon, then the Viceroy of India. ... The British reaction [to militant Hindu opposition] initially was to resist the extremists and to press ahead with the decision to form a province of eastern Bengal and Assam. The Hindu-dominant elements...ultimately forced the British to reconsider their decision.”¹⁵

It was with this background that the All-India Muslim League was formed...[It] assumed the role of spokesman for a people and a culture which it deemed to be under siege.¹⁶

¹³ S. Irtiza Husain, “Quaid’s Concept of Pakistan”, The Nation, 11 September 2005

¹⁴ Chaudhri Muhammad Ali, The Emergence of Pakistan, p 42-43

¹⁵ Lawrence Ziring, Pakistan in the Twentieth Century: A Political History, p 4-5

¹⁶ Lawrence Ziring, Pakistan in the Twentieth Century: A Political History, p 6

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So, it was in this background that Muslims felt that their rights cannot be safeguarded in a united India, more so when the British rulers would have left the land and they would be at the mercy of the Hindu majoritarianism.

Feeling the pulse of the time, Allama Iqbal surveyed the political scene and illumined it with philosophical insight in his presidential address at the annual session of the Muslim League in 1930 in Allahabad. In striking words, he indicated the goal toward which the conscious and unconscious strivings of Muslim community were taking them:

I would like to see the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sind and Balochistan amalgamated 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 me to be the final destiny of the Muslims, at least of North-West India.¹⁷

To quote Stephen Cohen, “For Iqbal, this state would not only solve India’s Hindu-Muslim puzzle, it would awaken and recreate Islam, freeing it from both alien Hinduism and obsolescent Islamic encrustations. ...Iqbal’s idea of Pakistan was not based on a European model of a nation-state, but on “an acute understanding that political power was essential to the higher ends of establishing God’s law.” Like many of his coreligionists, including those who set the stage for today’s Islamic parties, Iqbal saw territorial nationalism as a step toward a larger Islamic community.¹⁸

Colonial Masters’ Game!

Whether Muslims were in consort with the British colonial rulers in demanding a separate state for themselves, for the perpetuation of the British legacy and role in the region? This allegation appears biased and absurd, for it was the original Muslim demand after exhausting all other options to which the British acceded under the conditions prevailing then and upholding their concern for the right of minorities.

In fact, Britain had capitalized on existing differences between the major Hindu and Muslim communities, and the Crown’s programme of divide and rule aimed at neutralizing the political movements energized in the last half of the nineteenth century. It was Lord Dufferin, who had assumed the station of Viceroy in 1884, who invited Allan Octavian Hume, a retired civil servant and an Englishman, to organize a body that would work in close association with the government. That charge led to the formation of the Indian National Congress in 1885, an organization which claimed to represent all Indians, but whose initial agenda could not conceal an anti-Muslim bias. ...A larger number of Muslim leaders, however, hesitated in identifying themselves with an organization that they perceived to be threatening to Muslim causes. Moreover, it was their contention that Congress’s anticipated plans for a self-governing India did not include adequate protection for the subcontinent’s Muslim population. ...Led by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, the founder of the Aligarh Muslim University, these Muslims joined together in the Jamiat-e-Muhibban-e-Hind (Joint Committee of the Friends of India) in 1888...the

¹⁷ Chaudhri Muhammad Ali, The Emergence of Pakistan, p 25

¹⁸ Stephen Philip Cohen, The Idea of Pakistan, p 30

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association proved to be the forerunner for subsequent Muslim efforts aimed at defining a protected place within a British India that was more responsive to indigenous aspirations.¹⁹

It is doubtful if the British, so committed to their divide and rule policy, fully grasped the depth of Hindu-Muslim antagonism, or how their self-interested programmes had intensified communal bitterness. In fact, the record reveals that the British were little concerned with how their divisive balancing actions contradicted their much heralded law and order programme. But whether or not they were mindful or troubled, it was the manner and character of British rule in India which established the framework of interaction that the indigenous political actors fitted themselves into at the dawn of the twentieth century.²⁰

Ziring's assertion not only refutes the propaganda that the British supported Muslim separatism, but it also highlights the arduous role Muslims played for bridging the differences between the Hindu and Muslim communities, besides extracting from the British a formula that could best protect Muslim rights. In his words: "It is important to note that it was not the British who constitutionally addressed the reconciliation of rival moral claims but the major communities, nor was this made the purpose of the Hindu-dominated Congress party. That task was left to the Muslims who, anchoring their hopes on the rule of law, sought to bridge the differences between the communities, while at the same time acknowledging a British policy that, in its essence, encouraged the separation of distinct religious orders. ... Although it is still widely held that the Muslims prevented the creation of a modern unified India, it was the method of British governance in the subcontinent that prompted the political separation of the communities."²¹

Tradition of Peaceful Co-Existence and Efforts for Reconciliation

Muslims struggled hard for peaceful living alongside their Hindu compatriots in the undivided British India. They had ruled the land for a millennium and treated other communities with tolerance and full freedom to practice their respective religions. This feature of Muslim civilization was underscored by Jinnah in his address to the Constituent Assembly in the presence of Lord Mountbatten. He said:

The tolerance and goodwill that great Emperor Akbar showed to all the non-Muslims is not of recent origin. It dates back thirteen centuries ago when our Prophet (peace be upon him) not only by words but by deeds treated the Jews and Christians, after he had conquered them, with the utmost tolerance and regard and respect for their faith and beliefs. The whole history of Muslims, wherever they ruled, is replete with those humane and great principles which should be followed and practiced.²²

¹⁹ Lawrence Ziring, *Pakistan in the Twentieth Century: A Political History*, p 2

²⁰ Lawrence Ziring, *Pakistan in the Twentieth Century: A Political History*, p 3-4

²¹ Lawrence Ziring, *Pakistan in the Twentieth Century: A Political History*, p 4

²² Inaugural address to the Constituent Assembly, 14 August 1947, Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah: *Speeches and Statements 1947-48*, p 54

But after the loss of power and the failure of the so-called ‘mutiny’ of 1857, they faced harsh circumstances. Even then they did not call for a separate land, but “Self-government within the British Empire” as Iqbal would call in 1930.

Muslim leaders, in fact, worked for Hindu-Muslim unity. Jinnah was known as the “ambassador of Hindu-Muslim Unity” and Iqbal too sang verses eulogizing India and Muslims’ sense of belonging to it.

Before his joining the Muslim League in 1913, Jinnah had joined the Congress in 1887, and from the beginning of his political career he was primarily concerned with bridging the gap between Hindus and Muslims. When he joined the League, he already had established himself as an articulate and effective leader who got on well with Hindus as well as Muslims. In fact, it was Jinnah who defended B.G. Tilak during periods of his incarceration. It was also Jinnah who championed the right of India’s politicians to criticize and question the policies of the colonial government... Indeed, it was Jinnah and Tilak who led the debate that resulted in the Lucknow Pact, but their success was short-lived.²³

Their efforts were not reciprocated by the Hindu community and its leaders, as is evident from the failure of the Cabinet Mission plan and the short-lived Lucknow Pact that Jinnah had so painstakingly worked out with B.G. Tilak.²⁴

In addition to their efforts at bridging the Hindu-Muslim differences, Muslims also tried to convince the British rulers of the need and importance of a ‘different constitutional arrangement’ that could best suit their interests. The British had to accept their demand for separate electorates in view of the both the logic and the conditions of the time.

Only when they saw that their efforts for rapprochement were not bearing fruits owing to the policies of the Hindu-dominated Congress party and obduracy of prominent Hindu leaders, they became disillusioned and started calling for a separate homeland of their own. They maintained that they had preserved their distinct Muslim identity throughout the ages, but the same was under threat under Hindu raj.

Differences: Religious or Political?

In spite of all their differences, Hindus and Muslims had been living together, or side-by-side, for centuries. Though “the spirit in which the two people approached religions was not the same but this difference was not the cause of the conflict that developed later between them.”²⁵ So, what the cause was? It was the clash of political interests that created bitterness among the two communities. This is illustrated by Jinnah’s address of 14th August 1947 in the Constituent Assembly:

²³ Lawrence Ziring, *Pakistan in the Twentieth Century: A Political History*, p 9-10

²⁴ “they were upstaged by Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi,” Lawrence Ziring, *Pakistan in the Twentieth Century: A Political History*, p 10.

²⁵ S. Irtiza Husain, “Quaid’s Concept of Pakistan”, *The Nation*, 11 September 2005

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If you will work in cooperation, forgetting the past, burying the hatchet, you are bound to succeed. If you change your past and work together in a spirit that everyone of you no matter what relations he had with you in the past is first, second and last a citizen of the State with equal rights, privileges and obligations, there will be no end to the progress you will make.

Which 'past' was he referring to? Of course not the past of centuries. He had the decade of 1937-47 particularly in mind. That was the period of utmost strained and extremely embittered relations between the two communities – Hindus and Muslims. And bitterness, it must again be stressed, was not caused by difference of faith or any restraints imposed over way of worship. It was so because of the clash simply of political interests. By this time the words "Hindus" and "Muslims" had acquired more political than religious connotations and did not just mean followers of two separate religions.²⁶

Even after having got the country for which they had struggled hard and long, the Muslims were not espousing any chauvinistic ideas. They were rather introspective and looked for good relations with others. In his famous speech of 11th August 1947, Jinnah observed:

...the question is whether it was possible or practicable to act otherwise than what has been done. A division had to take place. On both sides, in Hindustan and Pakistan, there are sections of people who may not agree with it, who may not like it, but in my judgment there was no other solution and I am sure future history will record its verdict in favor of it. And what is more it will be proved by actual experience as we go on that was the only solution of India's constitutional problem. Any idea of a united India could never have worked and in my judgment it would have led us to terrific disaster.²⁷

Relations with India

Having won their freedom, Muslims looked for amiable relations with India. As Cohen notes: "No proponent of the Pakistan movement dreamed that Pakistan and India would become bitter enemies. ... According to Iqbal, the Muslims of Punjab and the Northwest Frontier Province would 'be the best defenders of India against a foreign invasion, be that invasion the one of ideas or bayonets'."²⁸

Aspiring for peace in the region, Muslims, in fact, assured that a Muslim country would contribute to this end: "Jinnah argued that without a separate Muslim homeland, South Asia would be mired in conflict and vulnerable to outside pressure. For him, the past pointed to the future. Pakistan would live peaceably with its minority Hindu population, and relations with India would be normal, possibly encompassing regional cooperation."²⁹

²⁶ S. Irtiza Husain, "Quaid's Concept of Pakistan", The Nation, 11 September 2005

²⁷ Presidential address to the Constituent Assembly, 11 August 1947, Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah: Speeches and Statements 1947-48, p 45

²⁸ Stephen Philip Cohen, The Idea of Pakistan, p 31

²⁹ Stephen Philip Cohen, The Idea of Pakistan, p 38

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Jinnah assured that Muslim India will discharge its responsibility with full credit and make its contribution towards world peace.³⁰

Aware of the Hindu-Muslim tensions preceding the creation of Pakistan, and echoing past calls for peaceful coexistence, Jinnah noted on the eve of his leaving Delhi that the past must be buried and let us start afresh as two independent sovereign States of Hindustan and Pakistan. I wish Hindustan prosperity and peace.³¹

As noted earlier, had Muslims' efforts for living in undivided India, or within the British Empire, though under 'different constitutional arrangement', been reciprocated by the leaders of the Hindu community, Muslims leaders might not have felt the need for "Indian Muslim State as the final destiny of the Muslims, at least of North-West India". But unfortunately, antagonism of Hindu leaders, and then India's rulers, did not change. Jinnah lamented:

It is very unfortunate that vigorous propaganda has been going on from the moment that the division was agreed upon and the two States were created that Pakistan is only a truncated Pakistan, that it is merely a temporary madness on the part of the Muslim League that has brought about this 'secession', that Pakistan will have to come into the Union as a penitent, repentant, erring son.³²

A tragic saga of loot and plunder, killing and murder attended the birth of Pakistan, as also of India. Jinnah saw it as a conspiracy, rather than a communal problem:

You can hardly call this communal trouble, although I know it has been very loosely described as that. It is now clear beyond doubt that it was well-planned, well-organized and well-directed and the object of it all, it seems to me, was to paralyze the new-born Dominion of Pakistan, which obviously was starting from scratch.³³

In those trying hours, he looked to Quran for fortitude and guidance:

We have been the victims of a deeply-laid and well-planned conspiracy executed with utter disregard of the elementary principles of honesty, chivalry and honor. We thank Providence for giving us courage and faith to fight these forces of evil. If we take our inspiration and guidance from the Holy Quran, the final victory, I once again say, will be ours.³⁴

Pakistan: Muslim, Theocratic, or Islamic State?

³⁰ Message to the President of the London Muslim League, 7 July 1947, Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah: Speeches and Statements 1947-48, p 22

³¹ Statement on the eve of his leaving Delhi for Karachi, 7 August 1947, Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah: Speeches and Statements 1947-48, p 39

³² Interview to Reuters, 25 October 1947, Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah: Speeches and Statements 1947-48, p 82

³³ Interview to Reuters, 25 October 1947, Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah: Speeches and Statements 1947-48, p 86

³⁴ Speech in Lahore, 30 October 1947, Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah: Speeches and Statements 1947-48, p 94

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Now, we come to the last part of this article: the nature and objective of the separate homeland of Muslims – Pakistan.

As stated earlier, Iqbal thought that this state would not only solve India's Hindu-Muslim puzzle, it would awaken and recreate Islam, freeing it from both alien Hinduism and obsolescent Islamic encrustations. Iqbal's idea of Pakistan was not based on a European model of a nation-state, but on "an acute understanding that political power was essential to the higher ends of establishing God's law." Moreover Iqbal saw territorial nationalism as a step toward the evolution of Islamic community.

The debate whether Pakistan was to be a state for Muslims or an 'Islamic state', and whether it was meant to be a 'theocratic' state has continued unabated. Once asked whether Pakistan will be a secular or theocratic state, Jinnah said: "You are asking me a question that is absurd. I do not know what a theocratic state means." When a correspondent said a theocratic state meant a state where only people of a particular religion, for example, Muslims, could be full citizens and non-Muslims would not be full citizens, his reply was:

When you talk of democracy, I am afraid you have not studied Islam. We learned democracy thirteen centuries ago.³⁵

Jinnah realized the danger of turning Pakistan from Muslim into a theocratic state, an ecclesiastical state. Jinnah and Iqbal, and other Muslim scholars such as Syed Maududi, have differentiated between Islamic and theocratic state and find no room for the latter in Islam.³⁶

In his address to Karachi Bar Association, Jinnah observed:

The Prophet was a great teacher. He was a great law-giver. He was a great statesman and he was a great Sovereign who ruled. ...Thirteen hundred years ago he laid the foundations of democracy... 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 every Muslim which regulates his life and his conduct in even politics and economics and the like. It is based on the highest principles of honor, integrity, fairplay, and justice for all.³⁷

Much confusion has been created about Jinnah's speech on 11 August 1947 in which he said:

You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place of worship in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed – that has nothing to do with the business of the State. ...you will find that in course of time Hindus would cease to be

³⁵ Press Conference in New Delhi, 14 July 1947, Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah: Speeches and Statements 1947-48, p 28

³⁶ For a classic exposition, see Iqbal's monumental work "The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam," particularly chapter 6.

³⁷ Address to Bar Association, Karachi, 25 January 1948, Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah: Speeches and Statements 1947-48, p 127

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Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense, because that is the personal faith of each individual, but in the political sense as citizens of the State.³⁸

It must not escape our attention that here Jinnah was referring to equal treatment to all citizens of the state, no matter which creed they adhered to. 'Hindus would cease to be Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims' in the 'political sense' means they will not be politically discriminated. This is what an 'Islamic State' aims to achieve, and has been the tradition of Muslim rule – as Jinnah himself said just three days after this, in his inaugural address to the same Assembly: “the tolerance and goodwill that great Emperor Akbar showed to all the non-Muslims is not of recent origin. It dates back thirteen centuries ago when our Prophet (peace be upon him) not only by words but by deeds treated the Jews and Christians, after he had conquered them.”

Looking from another perspective, as Irtiza Husain does, it can be said that Jinnah was reconciling seemingly opposed scenarios [the task of establishing an Islamic state, on the one hand, and removing the concerns of minorities, on the other] in his statements on different occasions. One of these was the oft-quoted 11th August 1947 Speech in the Constituent Assembly. One sentence in it “religion has nothing to do with the affairs of the state” is picked out and stressed in particular, but is “completion”, so to say, by the same Quaid only three days later on 14th August 1947 before the same Constituent Assembly as a correction of, not retort to, Mountbatten’s remarks is never mentioned.

However tolerant it may be, there is a line between Muslims and non-Muslims in a Muslim state at some point or others which stand in the way of their minorities’ feeling of not being regarded as one and the same as the Muslims in rights as citizens (not necessarily reflected in ground realities). The Quaid wanted that feeling to be rooted out from Pakistan.³⁹

It might perhaps be said that Jinnah looked to Qur’an and Prophet for guidance, but was not in favor of any haste to establish an Islamic state. It is according to the Islamic approach of gradual change with the change of minds as well as in keeping with the Muslims’ tradition in the sub-continent, where “Muslim rulers never tried to establish an Islamic state. Perhaps in view of the injunction “there is no compulsion in religion,” or because of just indolence or sheer lack of interest, or of the number involved, they regarded it as an impossible task.”⁴⁰ The establishment of Islamic state thus appears to be a cherished goal toward which Muslims march determinedly, of course, but with a nuanced and calibrated approach and keeping in view the ground realities – geopolitical and demographic – rather than rushing to that end.

Cognizant of the place and role of non-Muslims in a Muslim society, Jinnah underscored both the rights and obligation of minorities:

³⁸ Presidential address to the Constituent Assembly, 11 August 1947, Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah: Speeches and Statements 1947-48, p 46-47

³⁹ S. Irtiza Husain, “Quaid’s Concept of Pakistan,” The Nation, 11 September 2005

⁴⁰ S. Irtiza Husain, “Quaid’s Concept of Pakistan,” The Nation, 11 September 2005

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Minorities, to whichever community they may belong, will be safeguarded. Their religion or faith or belief will be secure. There will be no interference of any kind with their freedom of worship. They will have their protection with regard to their religion, faith, their life, their culture. They will be, in all respects, the citizens of Pakistan without any distinction of caste or creed. ...They will have their rights and privileges and no doubt, along with it goes the obligation of citizenship. Therefore, the minorities have their responsibilities also and they will play their part in the affairs of this State.⁴¹

We can sum up Jinnah's views, in this debate, in his own words as, he himself said, "this was his firm belief and whenever he said this, he was voicing not only his own sentiment but also the sentiments of millions of Muslims." So, his concept of the state of Pakistan comprises two main thoughts: "Let it be clear that Pakistan is going to be a Muslim state based on Islamic ideas of democracy, equality and fraternity; these are the basic points of our religion, culture and civilization." And, "All we ask of you now is to build Pakistan as a bulwark of Islam. Islam has taught us that whatever else you may be and whatever you are, you are a Muslim."

Conclusion:

The demand for Pakistan – a separate state for the Muslims of the subcontinent – was rooted in the conscious realization of 'distinct Muslim identity'. Though Muslims lived with Hindus together for many centuries – first, as rulers whose governments were tolerant to all religious communities, and then, as the ruled, along with the Hindus, by the British – they preserved their identity. Removed from power, they feared 'the larger community would override the interests of the smaller community' and called for a different constitutional arrangement – separate electorates for Muslims – to safeguard their interests in the undivided India.

Though the British colonial rulers acceded to Muslims' demand for separate electorates, Hindu leaders adopted stubborn stance on a number of occasions: they rejected Jinnah's 14 points, Lucknow Pact was doomed for their obduracy, and the Cabinet Mission of the British government remained inconclusive. The 'chauvinistic' designs and stubbornness disillusioned the Muslim leaders who had worked hard for bridging the difference between the Hindu and Muslim communities. Among them, Jinnah was even called 'ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity'. Sensing the real situation, in contrast to their lofty ideals, and feeling the pulse of the time, Muslim leaders started demanding for a separate homeland for the Muslims of the subcontinent.

Had Hindu leaders reciprocated Muslims' overtures of cooperation and coexistence, Muslims might have been content to live 'within the British Empire'.

Anti-Muslim bias of the Hindu-dominated Congress before the Partition was transformed into anti-Pakistan sentiment and conspiracy after the Partition. Communal riots that

⁴¹ Press Conference in New Delhi, 14 July 1947, Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah: Speeches and Statements 1947-48, p 26

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attended the birth of the two new states strained their bilateral relations from the beginning. Jinnah, true to his reputation of being ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity and wanting to establish the new state of Pakistan on sound footing, did not see this phenomenon as communal trouble, he termed it 'a conspiracy' "to paralyze the new-born Dominion of Pakistan, which obviously was starting from scratch."

This hostility has persisted till date, and is at the heart of tension between India and Pakistan despite many moves and rounds of talks between the leaders of the two countries aimed at resolve differences on many issues – dispute over Jammu and Kashmir being the biggest problem of them all.

Mega Lecture