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The concept of charisma, developed by Max Weber, and reformulated by its recent exponents, such as Edward Shils, David Apter, Ann Ruth Willner, Dankwart A. Rustow, and Robert Tucker, 1 is the most worked out concept of political leadership.2 It is found to be especially relevant to the case of the ex-colonial developing societies where "modernization" tends to break down or erode major clusters of old social, economic, and political order. People become available for new patterns of socialization and behaviour. New classes and groups are born. The legal-rational institutions are either underdeveloped or outmoded, and thus are not able to accommodate the newly mobilized social groups. The result is that there is a gap. There is a crisis of authority. This crisis encourages the emergence of a leader with "extraordinary" qualities to step in and to bridge the gap between the discredited old order and the vet unborn, uncertain future.3 The mission of a charismatic leader, given the conditions of uncertainty and unpredictability accompanying his emergence, is thus to offer a formula that would alleviate the distress of his followers. But then, it is not enough to offer a formula. A charismatic leader should be able to mobilize his followers around his



formula. For it is only after the acceptance of this formula that the followers will be willing to shift their allegiance to the new system of authority vested in his person. Finally, he should be able to lead them, quite realistically, into the 'promised land'.

To put it in operational terms, then, the rise and role of a charismatic leader is made possible by a combination of two sets of factors - "situational" and "personal". Situational factors include: 1) the breakdown of traditional system of authority; 2) the inadequacy of rational-legal system of authority. Personal factors include: 1) the "extraordinary" qualities of a leader; 2) the capacity to offer a formula for the salvation of his followers; 3) the capability to make his followers respond to and accept the new system of authority as represented by him; and 4) the ability to lead his followers successfully towards their cherished goal. An examination of both these situational and personal factors will help us explain the rise and role of charismatic leaders in a systematic and scientific manner. This paper seeks to apply them to the case of Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the undisputed leader of the Indian Muslims in the cataclysmic decade of 1937-47, to ascertain how far he could be described as a charismatic leader. Since it is agreed among almost all writers on charisma that situational factors are antecedent to the emergence of a charismatic leader, let us begin with the Indian Muslim crisis of the late 1930s, a crisis that the Quaid-i-Azam was called upon to resolve.

The Indian Muslim Crisis

The cirsis, in a word, had three interlocking components: 1) Hindu-Muslim communal problem; 2) the inadequacy of the British system of government introduced in India to satisfy Muslim interests and aspirations; and 3) the devolution of British authority in India and the imminent threat of the Hindu rule. Hindu-Muslim communalism was rooted in the deeply



ingrained differences, indeed contrast and incompatibility, between Islam and Hinduism. It is difficult to name two creeds, two attitudes to life so radically opposed to each other as Islam and Hinduism. No wonder, even when Hindus and Muslims lived side by side in the same village and town, social ties between the two communities were almost non-existent.⁴

But the religious contrast and incompatibility was not the only problem in the Hindu-Muslim relationship. The situation was further complicated by economic and political factors. Economic development under the British clearly favoured the Hindus rather than the Muslims. Most of the beneficiaries were high caste Hindus though the Parsis and Sikhs also did very well.5 The British not only dispossessed the Muslims from positions of power and wealth but also singled them out for deliberate repression for attempting to rehabilitate the Mughal empire in the Uprising of 1857. To add to their miseries, the Muslims themselves resisted what they regarded as the imposition of an alien system of education and government. By the time they got reconciled to Western education and the British system of government, mainly due to the untiring efforts of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, they were already considerably behind the Hindus both in terms of education and literacy. This clearly reflected on their strength in government positions, so that Hindus were able to supplant the Muslims in most of the important offices of administration.6

The situation was no different in the business sector. Hindu business classes were well-established in the economic order by the time Muslims began to move. By 1946, Hindus had almost taken over the commercial and industrial structure of the economy. Birlas, Tatas, and Dalmias were big industrialists, lending their financial support to Hindu interests in general and the Indian National Congress in particular. Muslim industrialists were very few and far between. Muslim



regions were not favoured by the British for industrial purposes. Muslim areas in general were agrarian and remained agrarian. Not surprisingly, then, Hindu entrepreneur and professional groups dominated commerce, industry, and the professions in the country.

Politically, the situation was no better. The British parliamentary system of government based on "majority" principle, putting Hindus always in a predominant position and Muslims never, made life untenable for the Muslims. The difficulties started with the extension of the "elective" principle in local self-government in the wake of Ripon Reforms of 1882-83. The devolution of authority under the reforms of 1909 and 1919 made matters worse. The communal division at the provincial level brought about by the working of the reforms strained relations not only in politics but also in social spheres of life, resulting in communal riots throughout the country, and even in attempts to reconvert the communal rivals, as reflected in Shuddhi and Sangathan movements. Communalism emerged as a dominant force of Indian politics, reinforcing Muslim fear of Hindu domination. The principle of majority rule and the eventual working of the Congress ministries in the provinces in 1937-39 convinced the Muslims that the political system was bound to make them, as Quaid-i-Azam himself put it, "virtually feudatories of the Central Government in all respects." The Muslims were a "permanent" minority and thus could not hope to turn the majority rule in the opposite direction. The more they saw powers vested in the centre, the more they feared it must necessarily in practice favour the Hindus, who formed the bulk of the population. They were no doubt somewhat protected by the principle of separate electorates, but then, the working of the Act of 1935 had clearly demonstrated that this electoral device was frightfully inadequate in the face of an overwhelming Hindu majority. 10 These feelings and fears became all the more intense with the knowledge that the British too,



in the wake of World War II, were on their way out and things would soon be left to the Hindus alone. The process of devolution of authority in India thus fanned Muslim anxieties and apprehensions all the more.

Although the Muslims wanted very much to get rid of the British rule in India they had little desire to trade it for Hindu rule. This was the herald of a crisis in which the Muslims having lost power to the British were now confronted with the possibility of losing it "permanently" to the Hindus. Constitutional and extra-constitutional safeguards could neither protect nor promote their interests. The Muslims were indeed, in the words of the Quaid, "caught between the devil and deep sea." 11

The Emergence of Quaid-i-Azam

But the Quaid himself was convinced that there was a way out of the difficult situation. As he told the Lucknow session of the All-India Muslim League in October 1937, the remedy was "self-organization and full development" of Muslim power to "the exclusion of every other consideration". It was only then, he argued, that a "settlement" with Hindus could be possible. For settlement "can only be achieved between equals, and unless the two parties learn to respect and fear each other there is no solid ground for settlement ... politics means power and not relying only on cries of justice or fairplay or goodwill." 12 The Indian Muslims saw in this resolve, this grim resolve, a true reflection of their aspirations, hopes and fears, their claim to existence as a separate political community. They flocked to the Quaid in their thousands of thousands, bringing him to the forefront of Indian Muslim politicis as the charismatic leader of Muslim India.

The Quaid was of course a leading politician of Muslim India even before he emerged as its charismatic leader. He had received his "first meed of general recognition" from Muslims all over India in 1913, in appreciation of his tireless efforts in successfully piloting



the Waqf alal Aulad Bill, a matter of great concern to the Muslim community. 13 He was one of the chief architects of the Lucknow Pact of 1916, the only time the Congress was to concede the Muslims some of their most fundamental demands, including the demand for separate electorates. He was the main formulator of Muslim interests and demands in the shape of his famous "Fourteen Points" which remained the Muslim creed till as late as the Round Table Conference in London in the early 1930s. He dominated the Muslim organization, All-India Muslim League, from 1916 to 1930, remaining its president for a considerable period of time. He was noted for his character, courage, integrity and honesty. He was known for his perseverance, political sense, organizational skills and an uncanny knack for identifying problems and for finding viable solutions to them. But the Quaid, paradoxical as it may appear on the face of it, did not, yet, assume the status of the undisputed leader of the Indian Muslims. It was only when the crisis overtook Muslim India in the late 1930s, trapping it between "the devil and the deep sea," that the Muslims began to look up to him as their saviour, their leader, urging him to lead them out of despondency and helplessness. The difference between the Quaid of early years and of later years was not so much a difference in his personal qualities of leadership as a difference of situation. And the difficult, indeed, precarious situation of Muslim India had made him the undisputed leader of the Indian Muslims, their Quaid-i-Azam, their charismatic leader.

As a charismatic leader, the Quaid had some very special qualities that made him ideally suited for the kind of crisis the Indian Muslims were confronted with. These qualities had already helped him survive and withstand the political vicissitudes in his earlier career, but now they were to be his main asset. Some of these qualities need to be highlighted.



First, the Quaid was a man absolutely sure of himself and his cause. He had incredible faith in himself. As he told one of his political rivals: "you try to find what will please people and you then act accordingly. My way of action is quite different. I first decide what is right and I do it. The people come around me and opposition vanishes". 14 It was precisely because of deep faith in himself that nothing could detract him from his mission. He could "neither be bought nor cajoled, neither be influenced nor trapped into any position that he had not himself decided upon."15 Secondly, the Quaid could not only respond to Muslim aspirations but was perhaps the only Muslim leader of his time who "knew how to express the stirrings of their minds in the form of concrete propositions." 16 This was amply demonstrated in the case of Lucknow Pact, Delhi Muslim Proposals, and the "Fourteen Points," which synthesized all the major Muslim demands. Thirdly, the Quaid as a constitutionalist and with all the attributes of a constitutional mind was more suited to task of negotiating with the Congress and the British the interests of Muslims in the future constitution of India than any other Muslim leader. He seemed to be cut out for the constitutional role from the very start. He was virtually a part of all constitutional discussions in India whether held inside the legislative assembly or outside, or whether between the League and the Congress or between the League, Congress and the British. The only two occasions when he was not directly involved in the formulation of any constitutional proposal were in 1928, when the Nehru Committee was working on its constitutional formula, and in 1932, during the Third Round Table Conference in London. Both Nehru Report and the 1935 Act failed to carry the Indian public opinion on their side.

Fourthly, the Quaid was an organization man. He would always be interested in organization. Unlike many prominent Indian political leaders, such as Gandhi, who was never a formal member of the Indian National



Congress, the Quaid was a thorough party man. He never operated over and above or outside the party routine. His entire political life, in fact, revolved around party activity - whether he was member of the Congress, the League or the Home-Rule League (for a while). He always considered himself subject to the party discipline. Finally, the Quaid was a more astute person, a better strategist than any of the contemporary political leaders involved in the Indian drama. He knew fully well "when to take 'the tide' and when to make suitable mends in the furnace of reality and expediency." 17 He never lost touch with the realities of a given situation - no matter how difficult or demanding. These qualities which crystallized with the years and which he demonstrated in abundant measure in the crucial 1937-1947 years were butteressed by the Muslim belief equally shared by those who did not approve of his future demand for Pakistan that he had no personal axe to grind. The very fact that the Quaid, in 1937, past sixty years in age and not in good health, undertook the task of leading the Indian Muslims even at the risk of his own life can only be attributed to his faith in the righte ousness of his cause and the compelling circumstances of the day rather than to any personal considerations.

The Formula

The Quaid responded to this situation, and offered the Indian Muslims in 1940 a "formula" that was to secure them freedom in a separate Muslim state, comprising Muslim-majority areas of India. The separate state was required not only to secure political survival of Muslims as a community but also to enable them to live their lives according to their own faith, traditions, culture, values and norms. Islam and Hinduism, the Quaid declared, "...are not religions in the strict sense of the word, but are, in fact, different and distinct social orders...The Hindus and Muslims belong to two different religious philosophies, social customs, literatures....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."

Indian Muslims were readily mobilized. The idea of a separate Muslim state galvanized each and every class and brought to the fore genuine mass sentiments and aspirations. The Muslim masses saw it as a "panacea" for all their sufferings and deprivations. The educated. urban middle class, merchant-industrialists, traders, bankers, professionals, and students saw great opportunities in securing a state where they would be in a majority, and where the bureaucracy, army, industry, commerce, banks, and professions would all be theirs. But, above all, there was an "unprecedented inspiration from the appeal to serve a community which they feel is their own, the appeal to work for the regeneration of Islam so that its people may climb to new heights of grandeur and its values be re-expressed in new concrete achievements." 19 The idea indeed came to offer the Muslims the only way in which freedom for them had any meaning. It soon became the symbol of their nationalism, their ultimate goal.

The result was that the years following the demand for Pakistan in 1940 saw the emergence of Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah as the charismatic leader of Muslim India. The more the demand gained credence, the more the authority of the Quaid rose. He came to acquire the position of a "living symbol of Muslim unity, Muslim aspiration and Muslim pugnacity."²⁰

Quaid-i-Azam, Muslim League, and the Pakistan Movement

Quaid-i-Azam could not, however, remain content merely with a popular response to his demand for Pakistan. He had to organize the Indian Muslims behind the League, and had to make the British and the Congress



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concede the demand. Therefore he took a number of concrete steps. First, he initiated the task of reorganizing the League to make room for the new entrants, particularly those who were moved by the Pakistan ideal, and thus appeared willing to join the League and serve its cause. He gave it a new organizational setup, opening new avenues of association and participation within.21 The result was that the League came to represent not only the traditional landowning classes, but also the so far shy and hesitant groups, such as modern, educated urban middle class, merchant-industrialists, professionals, traders, bankers, students, women, as well as the ulema. Indeed, it came to transform itself into a Muslim nationalist Secondly, the Quaid moved to seek the organization. support of strong provincial leaders of the Muslim-majority provinces, particularly in the Punjab and Bengal. This was by no means an easy task. The provincial leaders were reluctant to yield to the control of the centre. But, with a lot of patience, hard work and direct appeal to the masses over the demand for Pakistan, he was able to bring the provincial leaders under the effective control of the League.22

Thirdly, the Quaid launched a mass mobilization campaign to reach all sections of the Muslim society. In the process, some social groups such as the students, ulema, pirs, and sajjada-nashins, and women, who responded to his call, took it upon themselves to promote the cause of the League throughout the length and breadth of the country. Indeed, these groups served as a vital link between the leadership at the top, and the general mass at the grass-root level. The League Civil Disobedience Movement in the Punjab and the N.W.F.P. (1946-47) and the Referendum in the N.W.F.P. and Sylhet (1947) bear ample witness to the performance of these groups. Finally, the Quaid made the most of his efforts to organize the Muslims under the banner of the League by taking full advantage of the acts of omission and commission committed by the British and the Congress



during the war years. The Congress provided him the most momentous opportunity by resigning its ministries in reaction to the decision of the British government in 1939 to declare war on behalf of India, thus leaving the field open to the League. Quaid-i-Azam moved quickly to install League ministries in their place, especially in the Muslim-majority provinces, such as Assam, Bengal and the N.W.F.P. The Punjab was already under the League-Unionist Coalition.

The war itself provided the Quaid an ideal opportunity to mobilize support for the League. The British, in view of the Congress attitude during the war. were left with virtually no choice but to woo the non-Congress parties in the country, especially the League, the second largest party. This, of course, did not mean that the Quaid was willing to join the war effort. He would have nothing to do with it, at least in the centre, unless the British in turn were prepared to offer the Muslims "their real voice and share in the government of the country."23 On 8 August 1940, the British were indeed constrained to state publicly that they "could not contemplate the 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."24

Although the Quaid did not accept the August Offer because it did not address itself directly and sufficiently to the League demands, as later events were to demonstrate, the die was cast. Henceforth, no move could be made at the centre without the League influencing the course of events. The Cripps Mission of 1942, Simla Conference of 1945, and the Cabinet Mission Plan of 1946 went on to confirm the unassailable position of the League. The League was the party as far as the Muslims were concerned. By the end of 1946, the League stood as the "sole representative body of Muslim India," having secured 460 of the 533 Muslim seats in the central and provincial assemblies elections. In terms of percentages



of the votes polled, the League was able to manage 86.7% of the total Muslim votes cast in the elections to the central assembly and 74.7% in the provincial assemblies. This was a remarkable achievement over an insignificant 4.4% it had polled in the 1937 elections.

With enormous electoral victory, and convinced that the British were on their way out, the Quaid did not hesitate to deal with the British with a strong hand. Thus, when the Congress did not agree to a compulsory grouping clause under the 1946 Cabinet Mission Plan, he refused to attend the newly constituted Constituent Assembly, and thereby destroyed the British-Congress concept of United India. Pakistan emerged as the only alternative to civil war and chaos. "Surgical operation on India" was now the only solution. 26 On 3 June 1947, the British announced the partition of India, and on 14 August 1947, Pakistan appeared on the map of the world as a sovereign, independent Muslim state in South Asia.

The new nation-state of Pakistan received the Quaid with "adulation amounting almost to worship".2 On 11 August 1947, the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan elected him as their first President, with the official title of "Quaid-i-Azam". On 15 August he was sworn in as the first Governor-General of Pakistan. This was indeed the pinnacle of the Quaid's career as a charismatic leader. Never before in the history of Indian Musiims, wrote Raja Sahib of Mahmudabad, one of his disciples and followers, "... had any single person attained such a political stature or had commanded such implicit confidence and trust of his people as did the Quaid-i-Azam. He was a man who...with the singleness of purpose, his unbending will and complete faith in the righteousness of his cause, created a nation with life and vision out of an exhausted, disarrayed and frustrated people."28

Evaluation

The role played by the Quaid-i-Azam in the transition from United India to Pakistan was truly charismatic. He emerged as the charismatic leader of the

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Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah: The Charismatic Leader

Indian Muslims in the most crucial years of 1937 - 47, when the old traditional pattern of authority in Muslim India, partly due to the efforts of the British to introduce Western representative institutions into India and partly due to the reconciliation of the Muslims themselves to the new order, was no more. The existing legal-rational political institutions did not satisfy Muslim aspirations and urges. There was also a decline in the power of the British to maintain their rule in India by coercion, in part, due to the upsetting impact of the World War II. There was a crisis of authority and the Muslims were really lost and frustrated. Thus, the necessary conditions that help explain the emergence of a charismatic leader were present.

The "Quaid" was present too, endowed with all the "extraordinary" qualities necessary in a charismatic leader, and was willing and ready to give the lead. He was a rational and sober person, and possessed in abundance the adeptness and flair for "saying like it really is", and in finding viable solutions to difficult situations. In this sense, when he stepped into the distressful situation of Muslim India in the late 1930s to offer a formula in the form of Pakistan, it was in the nature of an "extension" or perhaps "a logical corollary of his erstwhile role" in the cause of Muslim India. One reason, and an important one at that, why his opponents failed to match his charisma was that they could not offer an alternative programme to his Pakistan demand. Coupled with his unusual ability to develop new and better solutions was the Quaid's abiding faith in himself and in his cause.

But, in spite of all these charismatic qualities, he had to wait till the desperate and distressful conditions shook the Muslims, and made their lives untenable under the existing set of circumstances. The Quaid's case proves that charismatic leadership is a relationship, not an isolated phenomenon. Unless the conditions necessary for the emergence of a charismatic leader are present, the potential leader, no matter how "gifted" and



with a cause no matter how potent, he remains without a following. There must be "an eagerness to follow and obey" and strong "disaffection" with the existing state of affairs, before a charismatic leader can make his appearance. 30

The Quaid was able to inspire as well as to maintain the support of Indian Muslims as no one else had done before. The Muslims withdrew their allegiance from the existing inadequate system of authority in his favour, as is abundantly clear from the overwhelming support he received from them in the years following the demand for Pakistan. He was their authority, their system of government, their link between the past and the yet uncertain future. The Muslims were convinced that he alone could lead them into the promised and better future. Hence, they not only followed him enthusiastically and spontaneously but also surrounded him with that honorific title which certainly is one of the symptomatic marks of the charismatic leadership. They hailed him as their Quaid-i-Azam (the Great Leader).

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- 2. The list includes as different and diverse leaders as Nkrumah,
 Ataturk, Stalin, Hitler, Nehru, Kenyatta, Nasser, Churchill,
 Lenin, Gandhi, de Gaulle, Sukarnu, Castro, Peron, and Kennedy,
 to name a few more important ones.
- 3. The result is, of course, "a functional theory of charisma," according to which charismatic leadership is a fulcrum of the transition from traditional to modern society. See Tucker, p.734.
- 4. Alberuni, a Muslim traveller and scholar who visited India as early as the eleventh century A.D. could not help notice and comment



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6. See some of the details on the subject in Zahid Choudhry, Pakistan Ki Siyasi Tarikh: Pakistan Kaysay Bana (Urdu), Vol.2, Lahore, 1989, App. 2, pp. 477-516.

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11. Ahmad, Speeches and Writings, Vol.I, p.155.

12. Ibid., pp.31-32.

 Incidentally, this was the first instance of a Bill passing into legislation on the motion of a private member. Sarojini Naidu, ed., Mohammad Ali Jinnah: An Ambassador of Unity, Madras, 1918, p.7.

14. Quoted in Hector Bolitho, Jinnah: Creator of Pakistan, Karachi,

1964, p.87.

- Saleem M.M. Qureshi, "The Conslidation of Leadership in the Last Phase of the Politics of the All-India Muslim League," Asian Profile, Hong Kong, 1:2 (Oct.1973), p.325.
- Jamil-ud-Din Ahmad, "A Disciple Remembers" in Jamil-ud-Din Ahmad, ed., Quaid-i-Azam As Seen by His Contemporaries, Lahore, 1966, p.207.
- 17. Sharif al Mujahid, Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah: Studies in Interpretation, Karachi, 1981, p.181.
- 18. Ahmad, Speeches and Writings, Vol.I, p.169.

19. Smith, p.275.

20. Saleem M.M. Qureshi, p.298.

21. Under the Constitution of 1940, Primary, Tehsil, District, and Provincial Leagues were established. Provincial Leagues were given representation at the centre in the League Working Committee. The Working Committee, in turn, was laced under the control of the Council of the All-India Muslim League. The Council was to be elected by the Provincial League from amongst its members. The President of the League was to be elected every year by the Council from amongst the nominees of the different branches all over the country.



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22. Indeed, in the end, it was extremely difficult for "a Sikandar Hayat or a Fazlul Haq to defy the orders of the Quaid-i-Azam". Khalid bin Sayeed, *Pakistan: The Formative Phase*, 1857-1947, London, 1968, p.94.

23. Ahmed, Speeches and Writings, Vol.I, P.433.

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26. Mansergh, Vol.X, pp. 138-39.

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29. Mujahid, p.39.

30. Eric Hoffer, The True Believer, New York, 1966, p.103.