



## *Quaid-i-Azam: Founder of the State*

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The leader who did most to give a concrete shape to the political vision of Allama Mohammad Iqbal, was Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, whose transformation from being an accredited "Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity"<sup>1</sup> to the most thorough-going champion of Muslim separation completely altered the course of the history of South Asia.

Born in an Ismaili Khoja family, after his early schooling at Sind Madrasa, he left for England at the age of sixteen to qualify for the Bar. After his return, he started his practice as a Barrister at Bombay. He was able to win for himself a leading position at the Bar. He made his debut in Indian politics in 1906, when he attended the Calcutta session of the All-India National Congress, as the private secretary of its President, Dadabhoi Naoroji.

During his stay in England he was attracted by political views of the British liberals and the performance of liberal leaders like Gladstone and John Morley<sup>2</sup> in British Parliament left an indelible mark on his young mind. In India he was impressed by G. K. Gokhale and Dadabhoi Naoroji. His earlier training and background determined his political platform, yet he was also a Muslim; hence, he could not ignore the Muslim interests.

His very first speech in the Congress session was about a matter which concerned the Muslims' *Waqf alal-Aulad*.<sup>3</sup> On his election to the Imperial Legislative Council, he sponsored the Waqf Validating Bill,<sup>4</sup> which brought him in close touch with the Muslim leaders.

The All-India Muslim League was founded in 1906 and Jinnah attended its early sessions, but he did not join it as he thought that its political objective was not high enough. In 1913, however, when the League amended its constitution so as to provide for the attainment of a suitable form of self-government as its goal, Jinnah joined it. He was in England at that time.

One of the significant achievements of Jinnah after joining the League was to secure an agreement between the Congress and the League on a scheme of constitutional reforms, known as the Lucknow Pact (1916). This earned him the title of "Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim Unity." Edwin S. Montagu, the Secretary of State for India, after meeting him in 1917, wrote in his Diary, "Jinnah is a very clever man, and it is of course, an outrage that such a man should have no chance of running the affairs of his own country."<sup>5</sup>

Along with looking after the interests of the Muslims of South Asia, Jinnah was doing everything possible to hasten the advent of the day when his countrymen could get a chance of managing their own affairs. The Bombay branch of the Home-Rule League of which he was the most active member, became the most powerful limb of the organization and dominated the political scene at that time. He dealt boldly and effectively with all reactionaries like Lord Sydenham, who were trying to hold up Indian progress and, in 1918, led a powerful agitation which frustrated the attempts to call a meeting for presenting a farewell address to Lord Willingdon, the retiring Governor of Bombay. It was a protest against the autocratic regime of Lord Willingdon, and for the first time the people were asked to intervene against raising a memorial to a retiring Governor. It





constituted the beginning of the post-war agitation. Citizens of Bombay appreciated his work and raised funds to build the "Jinnah People's Memorial Hall."

The treatment meted out to Turkey at the Peace Conference and the general resentment at the Jallianwala Bagh massacre and other performances of the Punjab authorities, brought a bold and quick reaction from Jinnah. In March 1919, he resigned from the Imperial Legislative Council as a protest against the passing of the notorious Rowlatt Act. In a long letter to Lord Chelmsford, the Viceroy, he wrote:

... I, therefore, as a protest against the passing of the Bill and the manner in which it was passed tender my resignation as Member of the Imperial Legislative Council for I feel that under the prevailing conditions I can be of no use to my people in the Council nor consistently with one's self respect is cooperation possible with a Government that shows such utter disregard for the opinion of the representatives of the people in the Council Chamber and the feelings and sentiments of the people outside.

In my opinion, a Government that passes or sanctions such a law in times of peace forfeits its claim to be called a civilized government and I still hope that the Secretary of State for India, Mr. Montagu, will advise His Majesty to signify his disallowance to this Black Act.<sup>6</sup>

In September 1920, in his Presidential address to the League session at Calcutta, he gave a vigorous expression to public resentment.

Strength of his character and boldness can be seen throughout his career, but one of the first examples is his speech before Lord Minto, the then Viceroy of India, who was presiding over the Legislative Council on 25 February 1910. As a young member from Bombay, speaking on a resolution on Indentured Labour for Natal, he said:

It is a most painful question — a question which has roused the feelings of all classes in this country to the highest pitch of indignation and horror at the harsh and cruel treatment that is meted out to Indians in South Africa.<sup>7</sup>

The Viceroy interrupted and said:



I must call the honourable gentlemen to order. I think that is rather too strong a word "cruelty". The honourable member must remember that he is talking of a friendly part of the Empire and he must really adapt his language to the circumstances.

Jinnah's response was quick and apt:

Well, My Lord, I should feel inclined to use much stronger language, but I am fully aware of the constitution of this Council and I do not wish to trespass for one single moment, but I do say that the treatment that is meted out to Indians is the harshest which can possibly be imagined, and, as I said before, the feeling in this country is unanimous.<sup>8</sup>

He, however, was not in sympathy with the methods adopted to deal with the new situation by M. K. Gandhi, who, back from his political triumphs in South Africa, started *Satya Garaha*, passive resistance, although it did not remain non-violent. Jinnah had his first public difference with Gandhi over the change of the constitution of the Home-Rule League, which was renamed as Swaraj Sabha. Jinnah opposed these unconstitutional moves, but was outvoted, so he resigned from the Home-Rule League. His departure from this organization meant its effective end. His break from the Congress came shortly. At Nagpur session in December 1920, the Congress adopted the Gandhian scheme of non-cooperation. Jinnah left the Congress saying that politics was gentleman's game and he had nothing to do with Gandhian type of politics.<sup>9</sup>

The Muslims in South Asia had already been disillusioned. They had learnt bitter lessons during the Khilafat Movement. Scurrilous attack on the Holy Prophet by Arya Samaj writers and the Hindu movements of *Sangathan* and *Shuddhi*, put an end to the short-lived rapprochement after the Lucknow Pact. The former aimed at organizing the Hindus against the Muslims and the latter used social pressures upon poor and ignorant Muslims to convert them to Hinduism. The Muslims felt





that they should depend upon themselves for self-preservation.

In this atmosphere of ill-will and distrust Hindu-Muslim entente was not possible, but Jinnah persisted with his task. In November 1927, the British Government, in pursuance of the 1919 Act sent a Commission under Sir John Simon, to make recommendations for constitutional changes in India. This Commission had no Indian member. The Congress decided to boycott it. The League was divided. Sir Mohammad Shafi favoured cooperation, Jinnah opposed it. The League session under Jinnah met at Calcutta and appointed a sub-committee to negotiate with the Congress. The League was even willing to abandon separate electorate if some of its demands were accepted by the Congress.

The Congress, on the other hand, as a counterpoise to the all-white, Simon Commission, appointed a committee under the chairmanship of Motilal Nehru, with his son Jawaharlal Nehru, as its secretary. Recommendations of the Nehru Report were a great disappointment to the Muslims. It was clear that the Nehru report desired the establishment of a Hindu Raj. The Congress had now shed its masquerade of nationalism and became frankly Hindu in its policy, programme and thinking. Jinnah still persisted in his hope to bring rapprochement. He presented his famous Fourteen Points. But the Congress did not respond, despite the pleadings of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, who said, "The simple position is that for the sake of settlement you are invited by Jinnah to agree to the proposition, which I consider is not inconsistent with the Nehru Report."<sup>10</sup> Sir Tej's advice fell on deaf ears. In sheer desperation Jinnah had to say that "this is the parting of ways."

Jinnah was a constitutionalist by temperament and training. He belonged to that group of liberals who were able to convince the British liberals like Edwin Montagu of the desirability of a marked advance on the road to



freedom and believed that it was not necessary to break the law and create a spirit of lawlessness in the people to achieve India's freedom. He had nothing in common with the henchmen of the Government but he was equally opposed to unlawful and unconstitutional methods. In a telegram to Sir Abdullah Haroon on 13 January 1932, he advised:

Musalmans [should] stand united. Urge demands [by] constitutional methods. Most unwise to join unlawful movements. Make clear we [are] not opposed [to] responsible self-government provided Muslim safeguards [are] embodied [in] constitution. Don't play in [the] hands of extremists [or] officials.<sup>11</sup>

This in a gist was his philosophy.

By nature he was a democrat. He worked hard for the calling of the Round Table Conference in London in 1930s, but he was not happy at the inclusion of the autocratic rulers of states in the Conference. Although Sir Samuel Hoare (Lord Templewood), the Secretary of State, did not invite him to the Third Conference, Jinnah made his mark in the earlier conferences and brilliantly presented the Muslim point of view and was able to convince the Government of the desirability of separation of Sind from Bombay, despite the tough resistance from the Hindu Mahasabha leaders. The Aga Khan, who was the leader of the Muslim delegation, admitted in a letter, "You know how much I rely on your cold commonsense judgement. A great deal of our unity is due to the dissecting which wild schemes get from your criticisms."<sup>12</sup>

Jinnah had a series of meetings with Dr. Iqbal, who had come to London as a delegate to the Third Conference and who had earlier in 1930 in his Presidential address to the All-India Muslim League session at Allahabad, stated that he hoped to see the Muslim areas of the Subcontinent become a separate Muslim State. Iqbal had become convinced that the Muslims in India were threatened with extermination. Feeling that the Muslims were ill-organized, without a leader and unprepared for a





final showdown, he singled out Jinnah as the one person capable of serving the Muslims in whose capacity and leadership he had the fullest confidence and faith. On 28 May 1937, Iqbal wrote, "Muslim India hopes that at this serious juncture your genius will discover some way out of our present difficulties."<sup>13</sup> On 21 June 1937, Iqbal again wrote to Jinnah, "You are the only Muslim in India today whom the community has a right to look up for safe guidance through the storm which is coming."<sup>14</sup> Iqbal got him seriously interested in what came to be known as the "Pakistan Scheme."

The Indian Muslims were a flock of sheep without a shepherd. Jinnah was persuaded to return to India and lead them. In 1934, he was elected the permanent President of the All-India Muslim League and he finally returned to India in October, 1935. He played a dominant role in the Central Legislative Assembly, to which he had been elected in 1934, and also started zealously to organize the Muslim League. In 1936, the League's constitution was revised to make it a more democratic and living organization. Steps were also taken for the first time, to set up a machinery for contesting elections on behalf of the Muslim League. A central election board with provincial branches was set up to take in hand arrangements for fighting the provincial elections under the Government of India Act of 1935. He toured the country to canvass support for the League candidates, but his efforts were partially successful. He faced opposition from not only the Congress, but also the Unionists in the Punjab, and the Nationalist Muslims and other conservative elements in India. Success of the Congress in these elections was surprising and an eye-opener for the Muslims. This success went to the head of the Congress leaders and they became cold and distant towards the League. Nehru even declared at Calcutta that there were only two parties in the country – the British and the Congress. To which Jinnah replied that there was a third party – the Muslims. The Congress, however,





ignored the Muslim League and adopted an attitude and policy which would mean the end of the League as a party. Nehru even decided to start a Muslim mass contact movement. The Muslim League was prepared to join hands with the Congress as members of a coalition Government, but the Congress was not in a mood to grant any concession to the League. The procedure adopted was, of course, a negation of the constitutional safeguards for the Muslims, but it was also not fair to the League. Before the elections, the Congress and the Independent Party led by Jinnah in the Central Legislative Assembly had closely collaborated with each other against the Government.

This was one of the darkest periods through which Indian Muslims had to pass since 1857. The prospects for them were most gloomy and many faint hearts began to suggest that they should settle with the Congress on its own terms. But there was one light which burned bright and clear. In the midst of the storm, Jinnah stood like a rock. He was the proud representative of a proud people and he hurled defiance at the pretensions and dreams of the Congress. He was not going to lower his flag to come to terms with the Congress. Far from accepting conditions, while being offered seats in the Congress governments, it would be he who would impose conditions.

The period between the establishment of the All-India Muslim League Central Parliamentary Board in 1936 and the Lucknow session in 1937 has been described by the Quaid as "a very eventful period in the Muslim India." It was during this period that the centrifugal and centripetal forces of the Muslim India were engaged in a final trial of strength – political and ideological and the success of one over the other was to determine the course of history.

The Lucknow session of the All-India Muslim League marked a turning point in the history of Muslims of India. Quaid-i-Azam appeared for the first time in





national costume – brown sherwani, white pyjamas and black Karakuli cap which came to be known after his name as the "Jinnah cap". It was symbolic, from now the destination was clear. There was to be no more looking back but to march forward as a united Muslim nation – bearer of a proud culture, heritage and history. In this session he made a masterly speech tearing to shreds the Congress pretensions of nationalism, pricking the bubble of Congress professions of love of democracy and freedom and ruthlessly exposed the fallacy of their arguments and the inconsistency between their words and deeds. He had the premiers of the Punjab and Bengal on his side and he knew that he had the support of almost every self-respecting Muslim. The Congress rule in the Hindu majority provinces did nothing to allay the fears of the Muslims. Enquiry reports prepared by a number of individuals pointed out in detail the hardships, ill-treatment and injustice which the Muslims were subjected to. The Congress flag flew at public buildings; *Bande Matram*, a song from the anti-Muslim novel *Anand Math* (of anti-Partition of Bengal days) was made the national anthem; Hindi replaced Urdu; and cow-killing was banned. Muslim representation in services was reduced. The Wardha scheme of Education sought to inculcate in the small children reverence for Hindu heroes, both past and present. Small children were made to worship Gandhi's portrait and textbooks extolled the virtues of Hindu culture. The Congress rule thus produced a deep sense of insecurity among Muslims. When the Congress ministries resigned, the Muslims observed 22 December 1939, as the "Day of Deliverance".

The Congress leaders realized that they had blundered and approached the Quaid to come to some terms but he was firm. In his reply to Subash Chander Bose, on 2 August, 1938, he wrote:

The Council is fully convinced that the Muslim League is the only authoritative and representative political organization of the Mussalmans of India... the All India



Muslim League, therefore, does not require any admission or recognition from the Congress. . . <sup>15</sup>

Despite the fact that the League had fared well in the elections, it had not formed ministries in the Punjab, and N.W.F.P. – the Muslim majority areas. The Quaid was bold, courageous and fully confident of ultimate success of the Muslims and he could look straight in the eyes of his enemies and present his point of view – that the League was the only body that represented the Muslims and a few nationalist Muslims in the Congress could not claim to be the representatives of the Muslims. In a telegram to Maulana Abu' Kalam Azad on 19 February 1941, he was candidly firm:

Your telegram cannot reciprocate confidence. I refuse to discuss with you, by correspondence or otherwise, as you have completely forfeited the confidence of Muslim India. Can't you realize you are made a Muslim showboy Congress President to give it colour that it is national and deceive foreign countries. You represent neither Muslims nor Hindus. The Congress is a Hindu body. If you have self respect resign at once. You have done your worst against the League so far. You know you have hopelessly failed. Give it up. <sup>16</sup>

As soon as the reorganization of the League was complete after the Lucknow session, the Quaid took up the questions of the determination of the Muslim objective. A sub-committee of the Provincial Muslim Conference held at Karachi in October 1938, recommended the creation of a separate Muslim State as the only effective safeguard against the Muslims being submerged by the Hindus. On 24 March 1940, the League passed the historic Lahore Resolution familiarly known as the Pakistan Resolution. Moved by A.K. Fazlul Haq, the Chief Minister of Bengal, the resolution said:

.... 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 readjust-





ments 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>17</sup>


**The Quaid emphatically said:**

The Hindus and Muslims belong to two different religious philosophies, social customs, literature, their concepts on life and of life are different. 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. Musalmans are a nation according to any definition of a nation and they must have their homeland, their territory and their state.<sup>18</sup>

After March 1940, the Quaid's cause became clear. All his efforts after that day, his interviews, his speeches, his negotiations, and his strategic moves were inspired by one idea – to achieve this end. He did not have an easy task. He had to bring all the Muslims within his fold and make them disciplined soldiers. He had to fight the Congress and the British who attempted to put all sorts of hurdles in his way. He fought his battles single-handedly, boldly and successfully.

Congress reaction to the Muslim demand for Pakistan was characteristically unimaginative and inept. Instead of seeking an amicable settlement with the League, it decided to increase pressure on the Government with a view to coercing it to transfer power to the Congress. The League stiffened its attitude towards the Government to prevent the latter from succumbing to Congress pressure, and to drive home the Muslim determination to achieve Pakistan. Proposals made by Sir Stafford Cripps were rejected both by the Congress and the League. The League, however, had the satisfaction that the proposals had at least implicitly recognized the possibility of Pakistan through non-accession provision by which provinces choosing to remain outside the Indian Union could form a union of their own.





The Congress, still determined to seize power through mass action, started the "Quit India" movement in 1942. The Quaid condemned the agitation and advised the Muslims to keep completely out of it. He could not approve of the unconstitutional and unlawful actions. C. Raja Gopalachari, attempted to convince the Gandhi-dominated Congress to come to terms with the League, but his efforts were spurned. The Cabinet Mission in 1946 proposed to divide the provinces into three groups, Hindu majority provinces and Muslim majority provinces for the purpose of framing their constitutions. The League accepted the proposals in the hope that a fully sovereign Pakistan would eventually emerge from the new constitutional arrangement. The League, under the guidance of the Quaid, had confirmed, through elections by winning all the Muslim seats, the claim that it represented the majority of Muslims and was thus capable of securing a homeland for them. The Congress also accepted the Cabinet Mission proposals but Jawaharlal Nehru, the Congress President, bluntly said that Congress was going into the Constituent Assembly, "completely unfettered by agreement and free to meet all situation as they arise." He hoped that there would be no grouping of provinces. To the Quaid, this *volte face* did not come as a complete surprise. His foreboding, that the Congress had accepted the Plan only to sabotage it, came true. The League withdrew its acceptance. Nehru headed the Interim Government and took office on 2 September 1946. The League, however, could not be ignored and it joined the Government on 25 October. The working of this Government could not be smooth. So Attlee's Labour Government had to announce the British Government's "definite intentions to take necessary step" to effect the transfer of power to responsible Indian hands by a date not later than June 1948.<sup>19</sup>

Lord Mountbatten, a friend of the Congress and admirer of Nehru, replaced Lord Wavell, as the Viceroy. Both Clement Attlee and Mountbatten were personally






and implacably opposed to the Muslim League and Quaid-i-Azam. They knew that, at that advanced stage, they could not impose united India on the Muslims, although they tried very hard. They, therefore, designed a plan to concede Pakistan on most unfavourable terms and enable India to establish herself as a powerful State, and further to create conditions which would prevent Pakistan from consolidating itself as an independent State. The date of transfer of power was advanced from June 1948 to 14 August 1947. After a lot of juggling, cajoling and threatening, Mountbatten compelled the Indian leaders to accept his 3rd June Plan. Quaid-i-Azam, singlehandedly, countered the manoeuvrings of the Congress and machinations of Mountbatten. He had to fight for every single inch of the land. Sir Cyril Radcliffe, Chairman of the Boundary Commission, altered the award and drew the dividing line to the benefit of India. Certain areas in the Punjab, though dominantly Muslim were handed over to India at the last minute, and thus linked it with Kashmir.<sup>20</sup> It enabled Mountbatten to pressurize the Hindu ruler of Muslim majority State of Kashmir to accede to India, creating a perpetual problem for Pakistan, as Kashmir is also the source of Pakistan's rivers and India could, and once did, starve Pakistan of its share of water. Pakistan, nevertheless came into being on 14 August 1947.

Quaid-i-Azam, the Father of Pakistan, was a realist who never permitted his vision to be obscured by emotionalism. He was an ardent Muslim. He was a statesman and a true leader who always spoke in simple and straightforward manner. He was a cautious man and weighed his pros and cons of a policy before recommending it to anyone. Some of his significant qualities were his independence of thought, courage, integrity, ability and prescience. His character was above board, his integrity was unimpeachable, and his abilities were unbeatable. His strict sense of discipline, enabled him to reconcile to the loss of politically





important allies rather than tolerate indiscipline. He clearly pointed out in his correspondence to Nationalist Muslims where they had erred and how they were playing into the hands of those who were attempting to trap Muslims into accepting solutions which would have led to the enslavement of the entire Muslim nation in a so-called United India ruled by the ruthless brute force of a Hindu majority. It is because the Quaid remained to the last, untrapped, that Pakistan today is free.

On 14 August 1947, he assumed charge of the office of the Governor-General of the newly independent State of Pakistan. A country with no government machinery, no trained personnel, no army, no capital and practically no money, was inherited. The non-Muslim population which would have provided the required expertise to the new born State, was advised by their co-religionists in India to move to India and in its place Pakistan was flooded with destitute, disheartened and mutilated refugees. The Quaid had spent all his life as a politician in the opposition camp and never had to shoulder the responsibilities of office. Now at the age of 71 and with a failing health, he was being tested in a new field and he did not fail. He remained steadfast in the face of calamities and was cool and unruffled in circumstances which would have been most trying even for an old established state. In the face of gravest provocation, i.e. Junagarh, which had acceded to Pakistan, but had been forcibly occupied by India, he refused to be nettled and concentrated on one job of getting the new State on its feet. The Radcliffe Award was very unpopular in the Punjab, but in a broadcast from Lahore, he said:

It is an unjust, incomprehensible and even perverse Award. It may be wrong, unjust and perverse and it may not be a judicial but a political award, but we had agreed to abide by it and it is binding upon us. As honourable people we must abide by it. It may be our misfortune but we must bear up this one more blow with fortitude, courage and hope.<sup>21</sup>





Here was the man – a man of principle unflappable even against greatest odds. He gave proof of wisdom and ability in tackling intricate questions of the new State. He followed a policy of goodwill and friendliness towards India, but India tried to benefit from the difficulties of the infant Pakistan – in matters, such as division of assets and the solution of the Kashmir problem, etc. Despite his failing health, by sheer iron will and self-discipline over physical fragility, the Quaid was able to attend to the details of the state affairs and undertook strenuous journey to bring succour and cheer to the suffering and troubled refugees and struggling administration in the Punjab, Bengal and other provinces. He died on 11 September 1948, leaving a mournful nation, but with the stamp of his iron will imprinted on it to survive as a nation against all odds.

Quaid-i-Azam wanted Pakistan to be a free country. 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 – we are starting in the days when there is no discrimination, no distinction between one community and another, no discrimination between one caste or creed and another. We are starting with the fundamental principle that we are all citizens and equal citizen of one State ....

He further elaborated that:

I shall always be guided by the principles of justice and fairplay without any, as is put in the political language, prejudice or ill will; in other words, partiality or favouritism. My guiding principle will be justice and complete impartiality.<sup>22</sup>

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