

Comment

Mohammad Ali Jinnah: His Vision and Legacy

Muhammad Reza Kazimi*

Eighty years ago, when Mohammad Ali Jinnah started his address to the 1938 Session of the All-India Muslim League, he spoke in Urdu: *Jab hum Patna ka tariki shahr mein aya*. Immediately the public started shouting: “English! English!” and the Quaid-i-Azam resumed his address: “When I came to this historic city of Patna...”. What was the reason behind the public’s odd demand? At that time it was clearly understood that Independence had to be taken from the British. The Muslims knew that they needed a leader who could speak to the colonial masters in their own language. That is why, though only a fraction of the gathering could speak or understand the language, they wished their leader to speak in English.

They were right, because Independence and partition could be achieved by referring to the political ideals the British as a result of Lord Macaulay’s *Minutes* had exposed their subject to. Mahatma Gandhi could not invoke the *Arthashastra* to demand freedom. Quaid-i-Azam could not invoke the *Fatawa -i- Alamgiri* to demand emancipation. They had to refer to Edmund Burke, to John Stuart Mill and other exponents of a very liberal tradition, which existed alongside British exploitation. This is why at first the British spread western education but at the turn of the twentieth century, Indians began to demand it. The uprising of 1857 failed, but the English East India Company also became a casualty and India came under the direct rule of the British Crown.

This is the reason that while speaking at the Anjuman Taraqqi-i-Urdu premises, on 8 December I advocated the retention of English. It is English which helps us to connect with the world, and it is expertise in English that helped us to achieve nuclear status. Whether you appreciate or deprecate this development, you must admit that such deterrence would not be possible by holding *mushairas*. The reference to English

* Dr Muhammad Reza Kazimi, Historian and Literary Critic, Karachi.

shows that though it was religious discrimination that led Muslims to demand safeguards and ultimately a separate country, the religious leaders for the most part opposed the Muslim League and opposed the Pakistan demand more stridently.

In India, the Muslim community was scattered, in some areas it was a majority, in some areas it was a minority. Can demographic vagaries suspend the application of human rights to a people? Let us see what the Quaid-i-Azam himself said in this regard:

There are millions of people who hardly get one meal a day. Is this civilization? Is this the aim of Pakistan? Do you realize that millions have been exploited and cannot get one meal a day? If that is Pakistan, I would not have it.

This brings us to the nature of the state that Quaid-i-Azam wanted. There are two aspects. In the first instance he wanted a state free of exploitation. But since initially India withheld the financial assets of Pakistan and Muslim plutocrats rushed in to save the state, the realities on the ground, and Mohammad Ali Jinnah's ideals could not be given effect to. The other aspect is the debate whether Quaid-i-Azam wanted an Islamic state or not.

My esteemed friend Dr. Tariq Rahman has tabulated the various pronouncements of Quaid-i-Azam on this topic, but first we must be clear what is meant by an Islamic state. The Ottoman caliphate and the Daesh rule have both been considered an Islamic state. It is neither, because the Holy Quran in *Sura-i-Baqara* verse 143 describes Muslims as "*Ummatan Wasatan*". However you translate "*Wasatan*", it is the opposite of extreme. God does not favor extremism in any direction.

I have highlighted Quaid-i-Azam's 1943 speech, delivered 75 years ago, because an Islamic state cannot be defined politically. It can only be defined economically. True! *Sura Noon wa'l Qalam* describes what sort of persons we should not obey; and though the depredation of kings is described in the Holy Quran through an ant, the fact that the prophets David and Solomon (A.S) were made kings, shows that monarchy as such is not banned. There is the Sura of *Shura* but the Holy Quran does not lay down whether a state should have a presidential or a parliamentary of government.

But as far as the economic principles are concerned, the Quran is very clear and manifest. No usury, no hoarding, no cheating in weights and measures and no gambling. You can debate whether usury means interest, you may debate whether gambling includes dealing in the stock market. You may try to explain away, but you cannot evade. It is on these principles that an Islamic society is to be ordered; a society free of exploitation. Another word regarding another economic activity.

Intoxicants are forbidden therefore poppy trade for the funding of *jihad* is also not permissible.

So far I was trying to explain the nature of the state Quaid-i-Azam visualized, but since the idea has been contested, even by a section of the *ulama*, we need to explain how and why Pakistan emerged as a solution to the communal problem of India? This question not only engages us, but the American Congress has sponsored research to go into this question. To them I refer to four books, all written by American scholars, all defended in American universities, and all written within the first decade of Pakistan's existence. They are:

1. Richard D. Lambert, *Hindu-Muslim Riots*, University of Pennsylvania 1951, Karachi, Oxford University Press, 2013.
2. William S. Metz, *The Political Career of Mohammad Ali Jinnah*, University of Pennsylvania, 1952, Karachi, Oxford University Press, 2010.
3. Walter Bennet Evans, *The Genesis of the Pakistan Idea*, University of South Carolina, 1955, Karachi, Oxford University Press, 2013.
4. Mary Louise Becker, *The All-India Muslim League*, Radcliffe College, 1957, Karachi, Oxford University Press, 2013.

These books taken together can cover a wide area, indeed a crucial area of their inquiry. Scholars both inside and outside Pakistan ponder over these questions. If we try to reduce them to three points they are:

Louise Fischer, H.V. Hodson and John Kenneth Galbraith give Mohammad Ali Jinnah's pride as the reason for the emergence of Pakistan. Jinnah out of spite, on being neglected by the Congress deliberately carved up India. This explanation does not take into account the many formulae Jinnah presented to solve the communal problem, which was not of his own creation, but the creation of Mahatma Gandhi. During the *Khilafat* / Non Co-operation Movement it was Muslim religious sentiment that Gandhi gave rise to, over the vociferous objections of Jinnah, who knew that the genie, once released, could not be put back into the bottle.

Whether he was temperamentally proud is also questionable. Had he been so, he would never have made the following admission:

I was considered a plague and shunned. But I thrust myself, and forced my way through and went from place to place uninvited and unwanted. But now the situation was different.

[Stanley Wolpert, *Jinnah of Pakistan*, Oxford, 1984, p.239]

A man who was proud would never risk humiliation, much less admit it when such a phase had passed.

The second reason that is advanced is that Jinnah being aristocratic in his bearing, shunned mass politics. How does one

reconcile this accusation with the public demonstration and procession led by Jinnah against Lord Willingdon, Governor of Bombay in 1918 when both Mr. and Mrs. Jinnah had to suffer the baton of the policemen?

The third criticism is that Jinnah deliberately kept the idea of Pakistan vague, so as to attract more and more adherents. This is contrary to the records. In 1944 to an APA correspondent, Jinnah defined Pakistan geographically, politically and economically. That the full six provinces were not attained in 1947 does not detract from the fact that till the last, Jinnah had resisted the partition of the provinces.

Yes, the Lahore Resolution was vague since sovereign and autonomous are not equal political authorities, but this is was precisely to provide for Pakistan and Bengal, emerging as two separate Muslim majority states. Had Pandit Nehru and Sardar Patel not blocked the emergence of Bengal in 1947 as among other writers Sheikh Mujibur Rahman himself testifies. [Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, *The Unfinished Memoirs*, Karachi, Oxford University Press, 2012, p.78]

Had Jinnah's acquiescence to the scheme of an independent Bengal not been frustrated in 1947, the bloody events of 1971 would never have taken place. Now it is the responsibility of his critics to explain the Rohingya crisis in view of the assertion that the two-nation theory has been drowned in the Bay of Bengal. Look at my latest book *M. A. Jinnah: The Outside View* published by the Department of History, University of Karachi, 2017. In this book, I have surveyed the main western and Indian writers on Jinnah. They cannot be accused of insincere adulation. Then since I know that in our present discourse the Quaid-i-Azam is compared by western writers to Mahatma Gandhi by Indian writers to Maulana Azad and by Bangladeshi writers to A.K. Fazlul Haq, I have included studies on these three leaders to provide a fair basis of comparison. With these few words, I humbly invite questions.

Question: I have read somewhere that Mr. Jinnah was not a good lawyer, and he lost the majority of his cases.

Answer: I don't know much about Law. I was enrolled for six months during the time of Azizullah Sheikh, at S.M. Law College, but then I had to give up. However, common sense tells us that if Mohammad Ali Jinnah lost most of his cases, his practice would not have been so lucrative.

Question: Mr. Jinnah was not exposed to the great ideas of his time, especially Marxism.

Answer: That is a misconception. When Quaid-i-Azam defined Pakistan in 1944, he said that personally he believed that the major industries and services in Pakistan would be socialized. Now because

India withheld the financial assets of Pakistan, Muslim plutocrats the Adamjees, the Habibs the Ispahanis the Bawanis, the Dawoods, the Haroons stepped in to defray the expenses of the new state. In such a situation it was not possible to bring in socialism.

On the ideological front, I must clarify that the term Islamic socialism was used by the Quaid-i-Azam in his Radio Pakistan, Chittagong, 1948 speech. In the same year Syed Qutb Shahid and Mustafa al-Sibayi of Syria used this term. I can't say who used this term first, but Syed Qutb gave the explanation that in Islamic socialism there would be no atheism of communism, and there would be no exploitation of capitalism. I know the reference by heart John L. Esposito, *Unholy War*, Oxford University Press, 2002, p.57

All leaders of the Pakistan subscribed to Islamic socialism, and references are found in their speeches. Quaid-i-Azam of course, Liaquat Ali Khan. Mohtarma Fatima Jinnah, Raja of Mahmudabad, Khwaja Nazimuddin. The term went out of use in the Ayub Khan Era, at the end of which, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Maulana Abdul Hamid Bhashani used it as a slogan.

Question: Mr. Jinnah promised a secular Pakistan in his 11 August 1947 speech, but Liaquat Ali Khan through his Objectives Resolution made Pakistan a fundamentalist state;

Answer: Your question has two parts, first understand the meaning of "secular". This term emerged in medieval Europe during the struggle between the empire and the papacy. Some land was called Church property, while the remaining land was called secular. Now in Islam a mosque cannot be built on usurped land. Within the Islamic dispensation, it shall be better to say that the sacred concerns the Rights of God—*Huqooq-Allah*; while the secular concerns the rights of creatures — *Huqooq-al-Ibad*

Now your second question is about the Objectives Resolution. Firstly compare Liaquat Ali Khan's resolution with the draft of the religious parties. They said sovereignty of Pakistan belonged to God. The government of Pakistan has no other obligation other than to enforce the *Sharia*, and bring all laws in conformity with the *Sharia*. Most noticeably, it had no mention of democracy. The implication was that a minority sect could impose its laws on the majority sects. The draft of the religious parties mentioned no minority rights.

See the Objectives Resolution. Liaquat countered them by saying that sovereignty of the entire universe belonged to God. Then he said that this trust would be exercised by the *people* of Pakistan. The Muslims would be enabled to practice their religion individually and collectively. The minorities would be able to practice their religion *freely*.

Two further points. Quaid-i-Azam's 11 August 1947 speech should not be read in isolation, but in conjunction with the interview he gave to H. V. Hodson. Secondly one must realize that Pakistan is not an island sprung up from the sea, but a territory carved out from British India. We needed to protect our minorities and their rights. You must see that though the form may be secular, the content was Muslim and this could not be avoided. Quaid-i-Azam had said that not he but the Constituent Assembly would frame the constitution.

Question: Why did Mr. Jinnah become the Governor-General of Pakistan?

Answer: That requires a little explanation. That Quaid-i-Azam did not want Lord Mountbatten to become the Governor-General of Pakistan, is clear. It needs no justification, but actually Quaid-i-Azam had asked the Nawab of Bhopal to become the Governor-General of Pakistan. What happened was when the All-India Muslim League Council met to consider the 3 June Plan [he asked the exact date from Khwaja Razi Haider, presiding], the Quaid-i-Azam made a speech that when a general wins a battle he turns over the power to civilian authorities. "I have won the battle of Pakistan for you.", he had said only this when Maulana Hasrat Mohani jumped up and started shouting: "No one other than Quaid-i-Azam can be the Governor-General of Pakistan" and his opinion was carried by acclaim.

Question: The Quaid-i-Azam's language policy, did it not divide Pakistan?

Answer: This has a history which is not generally known. On 6 January 1936 an Urdu Literary Conference was organized by Huseyn Shahid Suhrawardy and presided over by A. K. Fazlul Haq who stated that the Muslims of Bengal were not against Urdu. Then Fazlul Haq as President and Suhrawardy as Secretary of the Bengal Muslim League had stated the necessity of spreading Urdu in Bengal. But this question is subsumed under the general policy towards Bengal. The Lahore Resolution had been kept purposely vague, just to allow the separation of Bengal and Pakistan. Leave H. V. Hodson, even Sheikh Mujibur Rahman has admitted in his memoirs that while Mr. Jinnah had agreed to the Independent Bengal scheme, Pandit Nehru and Sardar Patel had strongly opposed it, Sardar Patel had scolded Sarat Chandra Bose for making the proposal. Those who said that the two-nation theory was drowned in the Bay of Bengal, should explain why there is a Rohingya crisis.