Creation Of Pakistan
The creation of Pakistan is a momentous moment in modern history. Although in the conventional sense, it took only seven years, from 1940 (the Lahore Resolution) to 1947, under the charismatic leadership of Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah (1876-1948), it was a long time coming. While Jinnah himself stated: “The Pakistan Movement started when the first Muslim put his foot on the soil of Sindh, ‘the gateway of Islam in India’, the movement for Pakistan earnestly began with the British rule in India, after the failed ‘War of Independence’ of 1857-58. Muslim rule ended in fact and in law, exposing Muslims to the sinister charge of ‘a political conspiracy aimed at the extinction of the British Raj’.

Fortunately, for the Muslims, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan (1817-98), the ‘most commanding Muslim figure’ at the time was there to help revive Muslim fortunes in an increasingly difficult and distressful situation. He exhorted the Muslims not only to adjust to the new situation but to make the most of it and suggested three important ways. First, he told them in clear terms that the British were in India for the long haul and they must reconcile and cooperate if they did not want to be left out and be marginalized in the emerging polity. Their lives and properties were safe and there were no restrictions on religious freedom. They should be ‘loyal’ to their new rulers. Secondly, if they wanted to make any headway in government services and professions, they should take up Western education and sciences. That was necessary. They should of course continue with their old traditional knowledge and learning. Finally, and most importantly, they should watch their own interests, indeed their political interests. Their interests were not, and could not, be the same as those of the Hindu majority community. They could not expect the Hindus to join hands with them for united and equitable demands on the political system. The system, especially the electoral system given its emphasis on numbers, was inherently biased against them. Indeed, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan opposed the Indian National Congress (founded in 1885) and its demand for the extension of elective principle in India. He feared that ‘It would be like a game of dice in which one man had four dice and the other only one’. Muslims were less than a quarter of the total Indian population.

This did not mean that Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was opposed to the principle of representation as such. After all, he was the author of that famous pamphlet in 1859, *Risala Asbab-i-Baghawat-i-Hind* (The Causes of the Indian Revolt), which lamented the ‘non-admission of natives’ into the Imperial Legislative Council and blamed it for the revolt. But, being a ‘realist in politics’, and knowing well the weak position of the Muslims, he was opposed to ‘the yoking together of the strong and the weak’, at least till such time that they could be educated at large to compete with the advanced Hindus. Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College (later Aligarh College) was founded (1875) precisely for this purpose to help the Muslims acquire and benefit from Western education.
Here it must be emphasized that Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was not merely reacting to the political scenario in the country but, more importantly, consciously and carefully, was building a case for separate Muslim group identity. He told the Muslims to 'adopt the world, not for its own sake, but for that of religion', Islam. Indeed, he warned, 'If someone became a star of heaven but ceases to be a Muslim, what is he to us? He is no longer a member of our nation'. Islam alone could bring out the 'national feeling'. In the end, the pursuit of this national feeling laid the foundation of what I term as the Muslim separatist political movement, a movement upon which his political successors, Aga Khan (1877-1957), Syed Ameer Ali (1849-1928), Maulana Mohamed Ali (1875-1931), Allama Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938) and, of course, Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah went on to build the edifice of Muslim nationalism and ultimately the demand for the separate state of Pakistan.

The Aga Khan helped institutionalize the separatist movement in two important ways. One, he demanded that 'the Muslims should have the right of electing our own representatives', that is, through 'separate representation', better known as separate electorates. Two, he helped establish the All-India Muslim League, a separate party for the Muslims. This was the only way, he believed, the separate electorates would be 'effective'. Like Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, he was convinced that the Congress was 'incapable of representing India's Muslims, or of dealing adequately or justly with the needs and aspirations of the Muslim community'.

The separate electorates, of course, did not come easy. The British Government, in spite of their favourable understanding, was reluctant to concede them. The Secretary of State, John Morley, insisted upon 'mixed electorates', afraid of 'Hindu annoyance' over the issue. Due to relentless efforts of Ameer Ali, personally and through his London Muslim League, the authorities in London eventually conceded the right of separate electorates to the Muslims in all elective bodies, legislatures etc. The Muslims could elect their own representatives to safeguard and promote their own interests. However, it should be noted that the separate electorates were granted to other communities of India as well, to the depressed classes/Dalit, Anglo-Indians, Indian Christians, Sikhs and others. It was not a special concession to the Muslims. It was a recognition of the harsh realities of representation in the system of government, based on numbers. Separate electorates were incorporated in the Indian Councils Act of 1909, also known as Moreley-Minto reforms.

While the establishment of the Muslim League, separate electorates, and the pursuit of similar separate interests, particular to the Muslims, strengthened and consolidated the Muslim separatist political movement, some prominent Muslim leaders such as Jinnah, thought that it was possible to work with the Congress to secure Muslim interests. Muslim interests and all-India 'national' interests, being pursued by the Congress, could be reconciled and secured at the same time. They were not necessarily in conflict.

Jinnah, in fact, in 1906, launched his political career on the Congress platform, though he joined the Muslim League later in 1913. Indeed, by virtue of this association, he was able to help successfully negotiate the Lucknow Pact of 1916, wherein the Congress (for the first and indeed the last time) conceded the principle of separate electorates to the Muslims. India witnessed a major constitutional consensus among the two main parties at the time. Jinnah was declared 'Ambassador of Unity', reaching the pinnacle of his career within a decade of joining formal politics. But then Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi’s entry into politics and the devolution of power under the 1919 Government of India Act, with a semblance of transfer of power to the people, under the system of ‘dyarchy’ changed everything. The working of the Act not only strained relations between the Muslims and Hindus, with this fight for scarce ‘loaves and fishes’, and hurt the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity but, more significantly, pushed Jinnah to the periphery of the system. Gandhi’s (Hindu) religious symbolism and extra-constitutional, non-cooperation methods further ensured that there was no place within the Congress for a politician of Jinnah’s type, a Muslim and a constitutionalist. Jinnah eventually left the Congress after its Nagpur session of 1920.

But then, Jinnah was sidelined not only by Gandhi but, notably, also by Maulana Mohamed Ali, a Muslim leader, who joined hands with Gandhi to promote and pursue the Khilafat Movement to save the institution of Khilafat in Turkey. Ironically, Mohamed Ali was a graduate of Aligarh College (and later Oxford), a founding member of the Muslim League, and indeed reared in the Aligarh separatist tradition. But, frustrated with the British policies towards the Muslims through the annulment of the Partition of Bengal in 1911, Balkan Wars (1912-13), the allied onslaught on the Ottoman Turkish Empire, home of the Khilafat, during World War I, saw no other way except to repudiate the old ‘loyalist’ policy of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and seek alliance with Gandhi and the
Hindu community at large. In fact, he claimed that, 'we will not lose by conferring with the Hindus as to the future, but by sitting with folded hands and allowing others to settle the future for us'.

While Gandhi readily welcomed Mohamed Ali to forge a common front against the British through the Khilafat-Non-Cooperation Movement, this Hindu-Muslim alliance was essentially an alliance between 'bedfellows in adversity', and thus did not last long. Violent outbursts such as the Mappila rebellion (1921) and Chauri Chaura incident (1922), caused the forsaking of the movement by Gandhi, without bothering to take the Muslims into confidence. The aftermath saw not only increasing hostility between Mohamed Ali and Gandhi but a spate of Hindu-Muslim riots for a couple of years. Mohamed Ali, of course, returned to the separatist fold, the separatist political movement, demanding 'fuller power' to the Muslims in Muslim-majority provinces. 'Luckily', he pointed out, 'there are Muslim majorities in some provinces'.

The Khilafat fiasco, so to speak, brought Jinnah back at the centre stage of Muslim politics. Jinnah had not taken part in the Khilafat-Non-Cooperation Movement and was thus free from its subsequent fallout. Elected president of the revived Muslim League in 1924, Jinnah tried to persuade the Congress leadership to accommodate Muslim rights and interests in its national agenda. He even called upon 'the Hindu brethren...to win the confidence and trust of the Muhammedans who are, after all, in the minority in the country'. He was convinced that 'if we, the two communities, can settle our differences, it will be more than half the battle for responsible government won'. In order to facilitate the process, he even expressed his willingness to negotiate the separate electorates provided 'five stable Muslim provinces' to balance the six remaining Hindu-majority provinces were conceded (Delhi Muslim Proposals of 1927). Mohamed Ali and a host of prominent Muslim leaders were on board.

But the Congress and Hindu Mahasabha were not moved. In fact, they went ahead with the formulation of the Nehru Report (1928) denying separate electorates to the Muslims and without any reciprocal concessions. The Nehru report was meant to be an agreed framework for the future constitution of India. Jinnah tried to save the situation by appealing to the framers, more as an Indian than a Muslim, to help 'seven crores of Mussalmans to march along with us in the struggle for freedom'. But it was to no avail. Mahasabha leaders, in connivance with Gandhi, went on to question Jinnah's credentials, charging that he 'spoke for only a small minority of Muhammadans...'. Jinnah was shocked. As one writer perceptively observed: 'From now on he [Jinnah] came to believe, quietly at first, in separation, either in the form of powerful, autonomous, provinces within a federal system, or ultimately in an independent state'.

A clue to his first option was the formulation of his 'Fourteen Points' (1929). The main idea was to secure an 'Indian Federation', with 'a maximum number of Muslim-majority provinces, with full provincial autonomy to guard against the threat of Hindu domination at the centre'. But, again, the Congress remained indifferent even when these points were formally taken up by the Muslim delegates at the Round Table Conference in London in 1930-32. Gandhi, in particular, was not interested in a genuine federation. All he could promise was that, 'the residuary powers shall vest in federating units, unless on further examination, it is found to be against the best interests of India'. It was an evasive position at best. In fact, for all practical purposes, Gandhi and the top leadership of the Congress had, by now, decided to proceed 'only on the basis of Indian nationalism untainted by any communal considerations', meaning minus the Muslims and their interests and demands. So-called 'Indian nationalism' had come out in the open. It was Hindu nationalism, simple and pure. No wonder, the Congress leadership and particularly Jawaharlal Nehru refused to share powers with the Muslims in their 1937-39 provincial rule (under the Act of 1935), leaving the Muslims in no doubt, whatsoever, that the 'Hindu Raj' had arrived in India.

By 1940, thus, Jinnah was convinced that there were in India two nations [Hindus and Muslims] who both must share the governance of their common motherland'. In reaching this point, Jinnah, of course, was helped and inspired by Allama Muhammad Iqbal who, very eloquently, made a case for Muslim nationalism and nationhood in his Allahabad address of 1930. Allama Iqbal, in fact, claimed that 'the Muslims of India are the only people who can fitly be described as a nation in the modern sense of the word'. The Muslim nation must develop its 'own culture and tradition', and for that a 'redistribution' of India was required. Indeed, he pointed out that the 'life of Islam as a cultural force very largely depends on its centralization in a specified territory'. Hence, there was need for a separate 'North-West Indian Muslim State', to begin with. In his personal correspondence with Jinnah in 1936-37, Iqbal went on to further suggest in clear and categorical terms that the 'new constitution [1935 Act]' with the idea of a single federation is completely hopeless. A Separate
Federation of Muslim provinces... is the only course by which we can... save Muslims from the domination of non-Muslims’. This ‘only course’ indeed provided the Muslim separatist political movement a tangible, practical goal to achieve.

On March 22, 1940, in his presidential address at the annual session of the Muslim League, held in Lahore, Jinnah proclaimed the need for the Muslims ‘to develop to the fullest’ their ‘spiritual, cultural, economic, social and political life’ in their own ‘homelands, their territory and their state’. The Muslims, he categorically declared, ‘cannot accept any constitution which must necessarily result in Hindu majority government’. On March 23, the League endorsed Jinnah’s position, and in a resolution adopted on March 24, made a demand for Muslim homeland in North-Western and Eastern zones, the Muslim-majority areas of India. Soon dubbed as Pakistan Resolution, the demand for Pakistan became the official creed of the Muslim League and indeed the Muslims at large. Jinnah had ‘lowered the final curtain on any prospects for a single united independent India’. All that remained to be seen was how this erstwhile Indian ‘nationalist’ and now the leader of the Muslim separatist political movement, transformed into the Pakistan Movement, would achieve the ultimate goal of Pakistan.

As expected, Jinnah started off with the reorganization of the Muslim League to make room for the new entrants, inspired and devoted to the Pakistan goal, to make it eventually ‘the sole representative body of Muslim India’. He also sought support from the provincial leaders of the Muslim-majority provinces. In order to ensure that this support was readily available, he simultaneously launched a mass mobilization campaign to reach all social groups and classes of the Muslim community, including ulama, pirs and saijdanashins, students, and women. In addition, he decided to challenge all acts of omission and commission of the Congress and the British during the war.

The Congress, by resigning its provincial ministries in protest against India’s joining the World War II (without its approval), provided Jinnah a heaven-sent opportunity to demand for League ministries in all Muslim-majority provinces included in his Pakistan scheme, except for Punjab which was already in coalition with the League under Jinnah-Sikandar Pact. The British seemingly had no problem with this transition. They had already been assured of the League’s support at the provincial level. Unlike the Congress leadership, Jinnah understood fully well the British stakes in the war. He did not want to upset them at this stage. However, he was not willing to extend support at the centre till they conceded his demand for Pakistan first. With the Congress ultimately launching its Civil Disobedience Movement, later ‘open rebellion’, the British could not help but concede the Pakistan demand in ‘principle’ soon enough. August 8, 1940 Offered and, more importantly, the Cripps Mission (1942) conceded some form of autonomy for Muslims. The League was the second largest party in the country (after the Congress) and a representative party of the Muslims which was a critical factor during the war not only politically but, significantly, from a military point of view. The Muslims, in spite of being a minority in the country, contributed as much to the army as the Hindu majority community. They contributed 37.65 percent soldiers against 37.50 percent Hindus, a fact well known to the authorities both in India and at home. More than 50 percent of the Muslim soldiers were ‘deployed in the area now constituting Pakistan’.

No wonder, Jinnah warned the British that ‘the League campaign if launched, will affect a large body of the army and besides the entire Frontier would be ablaze....’

Above all, of course, there was the leadership factor, Jinnah’s leadership of the Pakistan Movement. Charisma, which had started to manifest itself in the perception of the Muslims since the demand for Pakistan in 1940 was now fully vested in his person. He was their charismatic leader. They believed him to be the only one who could alleviate their distress and could, realistically and surely, lead them into ‘the promised land’. He had become for many of them an ideal, ‘hero worshipped by millions who endowed him with the characteristics of a saviour’. Their faith in Jinnah and the cause he espoused, that is, Pakistan, was duly reflected in the overwhelming victory of the Muslim League in the 1945-46 elections. This victory indeed ‘represented a crucial landmark in the emergence of Pakistan’. Jinnah had won the battle for Pakistan. Except that the British (and the Congress) were not prepared to concede Pakistan, as yet. The British came up with their Cabinet Mission Plan in May-June 1946 to save the unity of India and deny Jinnah his separate, sovereign Pakistan.

The Cabinet Mission Plan was a difficult, daunting challenge. The war was over, the Congress was back in mainstream politics, and the British Government, led by Lord Attlee’s Labour Party, was more than keen to appease the Congress and to accommodate all its interests for the sake of its future relations with independent India. Jinnah, knowing this, reluctantly, but tactically, accepted the plan convinced that the
Congress, opposed to the compulsory ‘grouping’ clause (which affected Assam in particular), will sabotage it which, of course, did not take long. Jinnah promptly withdrew his acceptance and, with the approval of the Muslim League, went on to reject the plan for good. Indeed, he now called for ‘Direct Action’ to achieve Pakistan. Though the League eventually joined the interim Government to help control the alarming communal situation in the country and also help save its vital interests in this transitional phase, the die was cast. Jinnah’s rejection of the Cabinet Mission Plan marked the end of any prospects of united India in the future.

On February 20, 1947, Prime Minister Attlee announced the appointment of Lord Mountbatten as the last Viceroy of India to transfer power to ‘Indian hands’ in ‘a manner that will best ensure the future happiness and prosperity of India’. How far Mountbatten succeeded in this task is a different subject. The 3rd June Partition Plan, the division of Muslim-majority provinces of the Punjab and Bengal, and the Radcliffe Award (days after the Partition) speak for themselves. In the end, however, a complex and complicated process for the formation of the new state was launched with East Bengal, West Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, North-West Frontier Province (now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) and Sylhet (the last two through referendums), all voting for Pakistan. On August 14, 1947, the legal formalities for transfer of power were met. This creation of Pakistan finally became a reality on August 14, 1947 after a long struggle and countless sacrifices. On August 15, Jinnah took oath of office as the first Governor-General of Pakistan, with the official title (conferred by the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan) of ‘Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Governor-General of Pakistan’. The creation of Pakistan, as a separate, sovereign state in South Asia, was complete and confirmed.

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