



## Jinnah's Vision: An Indivisible Pakistani Nationhood

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### ABSTRACT

Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's vision envisaged a democratic country based on the tenets of Islam. His invocation of Islam was not to arouse clerics to mistake it for theocracy. Jinnah earnestly thought that Islam and its idealism had taught Indian Muslims the virtues of democracy as it envisioned equality, justice and fairplay to everybody.

In his broadcast to the USA in Feb 1948 he had hoped that the Pakistan constitution would be of "a democratic type; embodying the essential principles of Islam". He reaffirmed emphatically that Pakistan was not going to be a theocratic state- to be ruled by priests with a divine mission. Even the Objectives Resolution (1949), moved by Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan, recognized not the followers of a particular faith, but the people- all the people irrespective of whatever faith they may follow. It is a pity that the Objectives Resolution has been interpreted quite differently to suit vested interest.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

To Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah (1876-1948), Pakistan meant a multi-layered quest. A quest for democratic governance, ideological resurgence, cultural renaissance, economic betterment, social welfare, and, above all, for political freedom - the grand objective, which he had concentrated upon so inexorably and so obsessively. Thus, long before Ghana's Kwama Nkrumah (1909-1960) had improvised the Biblical dictum to read, "Seek ye the political kingdom and everything shall be added unto you",<sup>1</sup> anointing political freedom as the Alladin's lamp, Jinnah had urged his followers, at the launch of his marathon election campaign on 12 August 1945. "We shall have time to quarrel among ourselves and we shall have time when these differences have to be settled.... We shall have time for domestic programme and policies, but *first get the Government*. This is a nation without any territory or any Government."<sup>2</sup> In sum, his quintessential message to his followers was: get the political kingdom first. In any case, this multi-dimensional quest was quintessentially summed up in his epochal 22 March 1940 address in Lahore, wherein he had said, "... we wish our people to develop to the fullest our spiritual, cultural, economic, social and political life in a way that we think best and in consonance with our

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own ideals and according to the genius of the people".<sup>3</sup> In this declaration as well, the quest reaches its crescendo in fashioning and developing political life, his immediate concern at the time.

Space constraints preclude an elucidation of the multifarious dimensions of his concept of Pakistan, but his overriding concern for political freedom and what it meant in terms of the taxonomy, political philosophy and ideological orientation of Pakistan, when established, call for a word or two. So does the related question regarding the nature and extent of Islam's role in Pakistan's body politic, which has become a contentious issue especially since Chief Justice (Rtd.) Muhammad Munir 1895- 1974 published his controversial work, *From Jinnah to Zia* (1980), and how its basic concepts have subsequently found expression, fullsome or otherwise, in Pakistan's constitutional framework over the years.

First, in his 11 August 1947 address to the Pakistan Constituent Assembly, Jinnah had called for an indivisible Pakistani nationhood - a concept by which all the inhabitants, no matter what their race, colour, religion or language, would be full fledged citizens of Pakistan, and that with equal rights, equal privileges and equal obligations (Yusufi, 1996). Of course, this concept diverged sharply from his erstwhile two-nation theory, which had intellectualized and provided political ballast to the demand for the Muslim right to self-determination. But Jinnah, the statesman that he was, knew for sure that the operation of the principle of self-determination invariably leaves a remnant of both the larger and the smaller "nation" on either side of the divide. And since Pakistan was being established as a nation-state under the Westphalian (1648) paradigm and that as a direct consequence of the application of the self-determination principle, the two-nation theory had to undergo a paradigm shift, once the two nations, encapsulated in that theory, had acquired full statehood. As a corollary, therefore, the two nations under the new paradigm are India and Pakistan, and not Hindus and Muslims<sup>4</sup>. And that's precisely what his 7 August 1947 message to Indian Muslims (Yusufi, 1996) and his 14 August address unequivocally proclaim.

Second, on 21 February 1948, Jinnah had stressed the need for "the development and maintenance of Islamic democracy, Islamic social justice and equality of manhood" (Yusufi, 1996). But there is no dichotomy between these two calls, as we shall see presently. Earlier, in his 15 June 1945 message to the Frontier Muslim Students Federation, he had talked of "*the Muslim ideology* which has [got] to be preserved, which has come to us as a precious gift and treasure, and which, we hope, others will share" (Yusufi, 1996).

The use of the word, "share", is critical. It means willing consent on others' part and not compulsion or coercion to accept the ideology under duress. Thus, steamrolling by the majority has been ruled out, once and for all. And as I have argued elsewhere, it is this critical aspect that makes Pakistan, despite professing a well-defined ideology, a democratic state. After all, every state has an ideology, whether it professes it explicitly or not, whether it calls it under various nomenclatures such as political philosophy, core political values or basic political assumptions, and *laissez faire* on the economic plane. However, what actually matters and makes it democratic or not is whether the minoritarian communities are considered full fledged citizens or not, whether they are given equality in the eyes of the law or not, whether they are extended the choice to subscribe to the dominant majoritarian ideology or not. More important, in Pakistan's case, extending minoritarian communities this privilege of a choice by their own volition becomes an integral part of the definition of an "Islamic democracy", as conceived by Jinnah and other Independence leaders, and as attested to by Professor Wilfred Cantwell Smith in his insightful analysis<sup>5</sup>.

Islam, or ideology, as Jinnah had defined it, was not meant to thrust theocracy on Pakistan's unwilling throats, but only to facilitate the formulation of an acceptable code of public morality on the basis of certain ethical principles. After all, such a code should be congruent with the cluster of ideals, values and concepts a people believe in - that is, with the ethos that has become enmeshed with the subterranean vagaries of their ancestral heritage, with

their *weltanschauung*. "I love the communal group which is the source of my life and behaviour, and which has formed me what I am by giving me its religion, its literature, its thought, its culture, and thereby recreating its whole past as a living operative factor, in my present consciousness (Mujahid, 1999)". Since for Pakistanis generally, the aforementioned cluster is inspired by and rooted in the fountainhead of Islamic principles and ethics, Islam comes in for a pivotal role in crafting a code of public morality and in the texture and taxonomy of Pakistan's body politic. "The gamut of man's activities today constitute an indivisible whole", Jinnah told Gandhiji (1869-1948) on 21 January 1940. "You cannot divide social, economic, political and purely religious work into water tight compartments. I do not know any religion apart from human activity. It provides a *moral basis* to all activities which they would otherwise lack, reducing life to a maze of 'sound and fury signifying nothing'.<sup>6</sup> But Islam's role even in this formulation process calls for the willing consent of the general populace.

This means that Jinnah, on his part, had given due recognition to an irrevocable linkage between Islam and Pakistan. But this shouldn't be too surprising either. Remember, in his epochal "Let Europe Arise" address at the Zurich University on 19 September 1946, Winston Churchill (1874 - 1965) had thought it expedient to reaffirm the indissoluble and inseparable linkage between Christianity and Europe, emphasizing the undeniable fact that "this noble continent, [which] is the home of all the great parent races of the western world... is a fountain of Christian faith and Christian ethics".<sup>7</sup> If such be the linkage between Christianity and Europe, why not between Islam and Pakistan?

Jinnah had invoked Islam because, as he had repeatedly said, "Islam and its idealism have taught us democracy. Islam has taught equality, justice and fairplay to everybody. What reason is there for anyone to fear democracy, equality, freedom on the highest standards of integrity and on the basis of fairplay and justice for everybody? (Yusufi, 1996)". And in his broadcast to the United States in February 1948, he had hoped that the Pakistan constitution would be of "a democratic type, embodying the essential principles of Islam". At the same time he reaffirmed unequivocally that "Pakistan is not going to be a theocratic state - to be ruled by priests with a divine mission. We have many non-Muslims - Hindus, Christians, and Parsis - but they are all Pakistanis. They will enjoy the same rights and privileges as any other citizen and will play their rightful part in the affairs of Pakistan (Yusufi, 1996)". Earlier, in his broadcast talk to the people of Australia on 19 February 1948, he had asserted that "Pakistan is not going to be a theocracy or anything like it" and that "Islam demands from us the tolerance of other creeds (Yusufi, 1996)". Thus, for sure, he stood for a democratic face of Islam - that is, for a pluralist face of Islam.

In asserting thus, however, Jinnah was not only articulating the new nation's rising aspirations, but also expostulating the ideologue's dictum. Remember, what Allama Iqbal (1877-1938) had said to counter potential Hindu reservations about his "consolidated North-West Indian Muslim State" in northwest India in his Allahabad (1930) address. "Nor should the Hindus", he asserted:

Fear that the creation of autonomous Muslim States will mean the introduction of a kind of *religious* rule in such States. I have already indicated to you the meaning of the word religion, as applied to Islam. The truth is that Islam is not a Church. It is a State conceived as a contractual organism long before Rousseau ever thought of such a thing and animated by an ethical ideal which regards man not as an earth-rooted creature, defined by this or that portion of the earth, but as a spiritual being understood in terms of a social mechanism, and possessing rights and duties as a living factor in that mechanism" (Mujahid, 1999).

To Iqbal, moreover, such a consolidated Muslim State would provide Islam with "an opportunity to rid itself of the stamp that Arabian imperialism was forced to give it, to mobilize its law, its education, its culture, and to bring them into closer contact with its

own original spirit and with the spirit of modern times"(Mujahid, 1999). Thus, Iqbal's proposed state would not only be untheocratic, but would also be inspired by the social contract principle, and would, moreover, be bereft of the Arabian imperialism streak.

This basic tenet was reaffirmed, again and again, by the Independence leaders in Pakistan's first decade - Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan (1895-1951) for one. The Objectives Resolution (1949), which was adopted as the cornerstone of Pakistan's future constitution, for instance, recognized not the followers of a particular faith, but *the people* - all "the people irrespective of whatever faith they may follow", as emphasized during the debate on the Resolution - as the vehicle through which sovereignty is "delegated to the State of Pakistan", and refers to the people in four other provisions as well (Mujahid, 1999). As Liaquat Ali Khan asserted on 7 March 1949, while moving the Resolution:

The State shall exercise all its powers and authority through the chosen representatives of the people. This is the very essence of democracy, because the people have been recognized as the recipients of all authority and it is in them that the power to wield it has been vested.... This naturally eliminates any danger of the establishment of a theocracy... in the technical sense, theocracy has come to mean a Government by ordained priests, who wield authority as being specially appointed by those who claim to derive their rights from their sacerdotal position. I cannot overemphasize the fact that such an idea is absolutely foreign to Islam. Islam does not recognize either priesthood or any sacerdotal authority; and, therefore, the question of a theocracy simply does not arise in Islam(Mujahid, 1999).

In thus dethroning the sacerdotal authority, the Resolution represents a radical departure from the Persian constitution of 1906 which sanctioned supervisory or vetoing powers to a separate ecclesiastical committee of ulema. This Iqbal considered "dangerous", and instead wanted the ulema to "form a vital part of Muslim legislative assembly helping and guiding the discussions relating to law" from the Islamic viewpoint (Iqbal, 1958). And this was precisely the procedure adopted by Jinnah and other Independence leaders, as exemplified by Allama Shabbir Ahmad Usmani (1885-1949)'s role in the debate on the Objectives Resolution.

That this version of an Islamic democracy was in accord with the views of Allama Shabbir Ahmad Usmani indicates beyond doubt that the ideologue, the founder, the first Prime Minister and the foremost religious leader of the day were thinking on the same wave length. And that certainly was fortuitous for Pakistan in its formative years. The Allama, on his part, gave stolid support to the Objectives Resolution, and categorically ruled out theocracy as the structural framework of Pakistan's constitution, arguing that "an Islamic state does not mean the government of the ordained priests. How could Islam", he asked pointedly, "countenance the false idea which the Qur'an so emphatically repudiated in Sura al-Tauba, IX, verse 31? (Mujahid, 1999).

Equally important, what makes this Islamic-democracy concept all the more reflective of the Independence leaders, from Jinnah downwards, is that it also elicited stolid support from Mian Iftikharuddin (1907-62), the foremost leader of the Left in Pakistan's formative years (1947-58). His address on the occasion indicates that he was in perfect accord with the main provisions of the Resolution, even with the sovereignty clause which has spawned a good deal of controversy since the publication of Munir's work. He considered the Resolution "not the product of the League Party in this House", but "the voice of the seventy million people of our country (Mujahid, 1999)". Refuting the accusation that the sovereignty clause in the Objectives Resolution smacks of "a theocratic approach", Mian Iftikharuddin asserted that "The members of the Congress Party need feel no more nervous than do the subjects of British Empire or the citizens of the Irish Free State on the wording of the Resolution" (Mujahid, 1999).

On the sovereignty of the people versus that of the sacerdotal authority issue, he explained that we have no ordained priests. We have no licensed *Ulema*. In other words, we cannot go and appeal to a final authority as can the people of Roman Catholic countries to the Pope or to the Priesthood. We, the Muslims, can appeal to no other authority on earth than the people. The moment the State loses the confidence of the people, it has no business to exist (Mujahid, 1999).

However, an intellectual who wouldn't suspend judgment in any one's favour, the Mian sahib also pointed out several failings of the Resolution. He pointed out the failure to mention the removal of the "main cause of inequality", to abolish the princely states (which were, of course, abolished subsequently), and to provide any "safeguard whereby people would be free to vote, whereby people will not be influenced by the masters under whom they work", arguing that,

Had we brought in such safeguards for them, then only would it be possible for us to give the people of Pakistan a real Islamic democracy and constitution which would have been for the people and of the people.... I have no hesitation in declaring that we may be acting with the best of intentions, but the constitution that we have to put before the country is a constitution for all time to come and in that it would be very wrong on our part, if depending wrongly on our supposed sincerity, we make a constitution, which those who come after us may be able to misuse.... I repeat, no one need object to the word 'Islamic'. If we can use the words 'Roman Law' or the 'British Parliamentary system' and so many other terms without shame or stint, then why not 'Islamic'? But you must give to the world an Islamic constitution. Had we given the world a proper Islamic constitution, a fine ideology, a new way of achieving real democracy, I think, we would have performed a great task. On this occasion I have a right to say - and I am not doing this to blame any member or any section of this House - I am saying as one of them, that we are not doing our duty. The Islamic conception of State is, perhaps, as progressive, as revolutionary, as democratic and as dynamic as that of any other State or ideology (Mujahid, 1999).

Interestingly, that concept influenced and guided most of the subsequent Pakistan leaders. Among the latter day leaders, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (1928-79), for one, evinces a quintessential grasp of Pakistan as "an idea" in history and its umbilical linkage to the rising aspirations for an Islamic order. Listen to the youthful foreign minister of Ayub's dying regime (1958-69) as he rose on the National Assembly floor on 16 March 1966 to spell out incisively what Pakistan stands for:

What are our objectives? What are our motivations? Pakistan is a great ideal. A member of this House has said that Pakistan is a man-made country. Pakistan is not just a man-made country. It is a god-made country.... It is a beautiful thought. It is a creation of excellence. That is what Pakistan is ... not just the sandy desert of Sind or the rugged nobility of Baluchistan and the enchanting lushness of Bengal or the inspiring plains of the Punjab or the raw courage of the land of the Pathans.... Indeed all these things ... go to make Pakistan.... [But] there is something much more to Pakistan. It is the blessing of Allah. Pakistan is the creation of the surge of Islamic nationhood. Pakistan is the product of an earth-shaking idea. It is a revolution cut out of the heart of history.... Pakistan is a live revolution. Pakistan is a mystical idea ... Pakistan is the heart-throb of the people. Pakistan is the culmination of the aspirations of the Islamic order.<sup>8</sup>

On another occasion, Bhutto, a thinker besides a political animal that he was, picked up the Islam-Pakistan linkage theme to put Islam into the foundational groundwork of his newly formed socialist-oriented Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) (f. 1967), arguing,



... We are all wedded to certain basic principles. We have said that Islam is our faith and for Islam we will give our lives.... It is the basis of Pakistan. There is no controversy on that and if any party were not to make Islam as the main pillar of its ideology, then that party would not be a Pakistani party. It would be an alien party. That goes without saying.... At the same time, we believe ... that Islam and socialism are compatible.... We believe that the country must have a socialist economy because for 20 years we have seen only loot and plunder.<sup>9</sup>

The Manifesto also argued that the party's "aims follow from the political and social ethics of Islam. The Party thus strives to put in practice the noble ideals of the Muslim Faith."<sup>10</sup>

The rising aspirations for an Islamic order, which both Jinnah and Bhutto had referred to, do not by any means imply any sort of discrimination against non-Muslims, not to speak of consigning them to a second-class citizenship status - even as the *Misaq-i-Madinah* (622/623), avers. In a sense, the *Misaq* represents an early version of a social contract for the establishment of a proto nation-state, albeit nebulous, promulgated by the Prophet (PBUH) to govern the first Islamic state in Medina. For the multi-religious, multi-racial, multi-cultural and multi-lingual Medinite state, the *Misaq* lays down a "national" framework of a sort for the times it was framed, exemplifying a pluralist approach. It describes the Believers (Quraishite and Yathrabite Muslims) and the Jews as "a community (*ummah*)" and as "a political unit (*ummah*) as distinct from all the people [of the world]" (Articles 1, 2 and 25-35). It accords religious and cultural autonomy, and concedes application of the Mosaic law for resolving disputes among the Jews. It makes them the collaborators in the defence of Medina (Articles 24, 37, 38,44 and 45). In short, the *Misaq* conceded to the Jewish tribes the same rights, the same privileges and the same obligations as were accorded to the Believers. Not only was the defence of *Medina* enjoined as a common responsibility of all its inhabitants, but the Yathrib valley was as well described as "an unavoidable territory" - that is "sacred for the people of this document" (Hamidullah, 1968; Watt, 1981) - that is, those subscribing to the *Misaq*. These two entwined stipulations endow the first Islamic state under the Prophet (PBUH) with a core nation-state dimension or characteristic. Watt (1981) also considers the *Misaq* "as a source for the ideas underlying the Islamic state in the early formative years". In sum, a state which is *ab initio* and ipso facto based on a "social contract", which makes no distinction between the various groups/communities inhabiting it, which considers all of them as integral parts of a single *ummah* or political community, though guided by a specific ideology - in this case, by Islam - can by no means be considered a theocratic or an ideological state. Brimming with these characteristics as the Medinite state was, it was by no means an ideological state either. This is precisely what Jinnah's monumental 11 August address signifies. No wonder, he had no problem in invoking this Medinite model in his response to the last Viceroy's address to the Constituent Assembly, three days later (Yusufi, 1996).

Interestingly, Allama Usmani, in his afore-mentioned address, had also lent full theological weight to the well recognized view that even those who do not subscribe to the majoritarian Islamic-democracy concept *cannot* be debarred from occupying "a place in the administrative machinery of the State" (Mujahid, 1999). In tandem, not only by profession but in practice as well, Pakistan, throughout its existential career, has held firm to this judicious policy. Thus, the non-Muslims, whether they believe in that concept or not, have been routinely accommodated in Pakistan's administrative structure. Little surprising, Justices Cornelius, Dorab Patel and Rana Bhagwandas (rtd. 2007) - a Christian, a Parsee, and a Hindu - have not only occupied the highest slots on the judicial side, but have also made notable contributions to resolving constitutional crises at various junctures in the nation's chequered history. Dorab Patel was also the only judge to be officially nominated by Pakistan for the International Court of Justice's top post. This couldn't have happened had Jinnah and the Independence leaders conceived Pakistan as an ideological state where those who fail to subscribe to the dominant state or majoritarian ideology are severely debarred from occupying any space in the state structure, as was or is the case in the (defunct) Soviet Union (d. 1991) and in Israel. This means, even in Allama Usmani's perception - that is,

at the pristine Islamic conceptual level - as well, Pakistan is not an ideological state, but a state with an ideology.

In short, Jinnah wanted Pakistan to be progressive, forward-looking, democratic, and welfare-orientated, but firmly anchored to the pristine principles of Islam, since these principles, he believed, are inherently rooted in the enduring traits of equality, solidarity, freedom and emancipation of the marginalized sections of the society. In interpreting Islamic principles thus, however, Jinnah was not alone. Prof. Fazlur Rahman, a leading Islamic scholar whose much acclaimed *Islam* (1966) was considered a seminal work by *The Times* (London), identifies "humanitarianism, egalitarianism, social justice, economic justice and solidarity" as the most fundamental "principles which succinctly summed up all the developments that had underlain the Islamic movement in its actual progress [during the Prophet (PBUH)'s time] and towards which it had tended as its goal", and which "the Prophet [PBUH] [had] enunciated and formally pronounced" during "his remarkably effective 'Farewell Pilgrimage' address".<sup>11</sup> Indeed, to Rahman, "the essential impulse of the Qur'an" was "monotheism and a social and economic order".<sup>12</sup>

Thus, in short, did Jinnah envision Pakistan. And unless and until his guidelines are translated into public policy and ground reality, that sort of Pakistan would continue to elude Pakistanis.

#### **END NOTES:**

1. Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana (New York: Nelson, 1957), p. 53.
2. Khurshid Ahmad Khan Yusufi (ed.), *Speeches, Statements & Messages of the Quaid-e-Azam* (Lahore: Bazm-i-Iqbal, 1996), III: 2039. Cf. "it was impossible to separate politics from economics and the social and educational life of a nation" he told the Memon Chamber of Commerce on 01 October 1943, adding. "He knew of no nation that had built up its economic, social and educational life without political power and authority vested in the hands of the people".
3. Khurshid Ahmad Khan Yusufi (ed.), *Speeches, Statements & Messages of the Quaid-e-Azam* (Lahore: Bazm-i-Iqbal, 1996), II: 1183.
4. For an extended discussion, see Sharif al Mujahid, "Ideological state or state with an ideology", Dawn (Karachi), Independence Day Supplement, 14 August 2006.
5. Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Pakistan as an Islamic State* (Lahore: Ashraf, 1952), p. 45; see also Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Islam in Modern History*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), pp. 247-51.
6. Jinnah to Gandhi, 21 January 1940, Syed Sharifudin Pirzada (ed.), *Quaid-i-Azam Correspondence* (Karachi: East-West Publishing co., 197), p. 98.
7. Winston Churchill, "Let Europe Arise", *The Nineteenth Century and After* (London), Dccc xxxiii, December 1946, p. 297
8. Cited in Stanley Wolpert, *Zulfi Bhutto of Pakistan: His Life and Times* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 104.
9. Cited in Stanley Wolpert, *Zulfi Bhutto of Pakistan: His Life and Times* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 116.
10. Cited in Stanley Wolpert, *Zulfi Bhutto of Pakistan: His Life and Times* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 116.

11. Fazlur Rahman, *Islam* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 2nd edn., 1979), p. 25
12. Fazlur Rahman, *Islam* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 2nd edn., 1979) p. 19.

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