

# ALLAMA IQBAL AND THE PAKISTAN MOVEMENT

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In his early years (i.e., upto 1905) Allama Mohammad Iqbal was proud of India, the land of his birth The opening verse of one of the poems which he wrote during this period reads:

سارے جہاں سے اچھا  
ہندوستان ہمارا  
ہم بلبلیں ہیں اس کی یہ  
گلستان ہمارا<sup>1</sup>

In another poem, written during the same period, Iqbal said:

پتھر کی مورتوں میں  
سمجھا ہے تو خدا ہے

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<sup>1</sup> Bang-i-Dara, 1959 reprint, p. 82.

خاکِ وطنِ کا مجھ کو پر ذرہ  
دیوتا ہے<sup>2</sup>

During 1905-1908, when he was studying philosophy in Europe, Iqbal began to have second thoughts about man's devotion to his country. This was in part due to his reaction to the impact of territorial nationalism in Europe which he observed at first hand. Partly the rethinking was due to the in-depth study of Islam which he then made. By the end of this period Iqbal's ideas about nationalism had undergone much change. The principles of Islam, and not territorial nationalism, from then onwards appealed to Iqbal. In one his poems written shortly after 1908, while speaking of Delhi, the capital city of India, he refers to it as one of the centres during the glorious period of the history of Muslims. In the same poem he also mentions Baghdad, Cardova and Constantinople, all witnesses to the great achievements of Muslims.<sup>3</sup>

The place of pride which Islam came to occupy in Iqbal's thinking after 1908 naturally led him to write:

چین و عرب ہمارا،  
ہندوستان ہمارا  
مسلم ہیں ہم، وطن ہے<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Same, p. 88.

<sup>3</sup> Same, pp. 155-57.

<sup>4</sup> Same, p. 172.

In a lecture delivered in 1910 Iqbal explained that the Muslim concept of nationality was linked neither with territory, nor with language, nor with race. "The essential difference between the Muslim community and other communities of the world consists in our peculiar concept of nationality. It is not the unity of language or country or the identity of economic interests that constitutes the basic principle of our nationality. It is because we all believe in a certain view of the universe and participate in the same historical tradition that we are members of the society founded by the Prophet of Islam."<sup>5</sup> In one of his poems written after 1908 Iqbal said:

اپنی ملت پر قیاس اقوام مغرب  
 سے نہ کر  
 خاص ہے ترکیب میں قوم رسول  
 ہاشمی  
 ان کی جمیت کا ہے ملک و  
 نسب پر انحصار  
 قوت مذہب سے مستحکم ہے  
 جمیت تری<sup>6</sup>

One of the developments resulting from the First World War was the further popularity of the concept of nationalism, more particularly in the West. Since this concept directly clashed with the principles of Islam. Iqbal strongly criticised it:

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<sup>5</sup> Latif Ahmed Sherwani (Ed.), *Speeches, Writings and Statements of Iqbal*, Lahore, 1977, p. 104.

<sup>6</sup> *Bang-i-Dara*, p. 279.

اس دور میں سے اور ہے  
جام اور ہے جم اور  
ساقی نے بنا کی روشن  
لطف وستم اور  
مسلم نے بھی تعمیر کیا  
اپنا حرم اور  
تہذیب کے آذر نے  
ترشوائے صنم اور  
ان تازہ خدائو میں بڑا  
سب سے وطن ہے  
جو پیرہن اس کا ہے وہ  
مذہب کا کفن ہے<sup>7</sup>

Understandably, Iqbal did not approve of the strategies adopted, and the efforts made, by some Indian leaders to evolve one single nation in India. Speaking in the Punjab Legislative Council in 1927, he observed

It has been argued that the present system [of competitive examination tempered by selection and nomination] tends to retard the progress of what my friend [Sardar Ujjal Singh] called nationality. Well, I do not know whether it is desirable to become a nation. It is a proposition which can be controverted.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Same, p. 173.

<sup>8</sup> Latif Ahmed Sherwani, cited, p. 53.

Even though Iqbal's thinking was based upon Islamic principles, he was a universalist in the true sense of the world. As early as 1921, in a letter to Prof. R. A. Nicholson, Iqbal described himself "a lover of all mankind" and said: "...it is in view of practical and not patriotic considerations... that I am compelled to start with a specific society (i.e. Islam) which, among the societies of the world, happens to be the only one suitable to my purpose. . . All men and not Muslims alone are meant for the Kingdom of God on earth, provided they say good-bye to their idols of race and nationality, and treat one another as personalities."<sup>9</sup> In his poetry, Iqbal, the universalist, gave expression to his thoughts in these words:

ہوس نے کر دیا ہے ٹکرے ٹکرے  
 نوع انسان کو  
 اخوت کا بیان ہو جا محبت کی  
 زبان ہو جا  
 یہ ہندی وہ خراسانی، یہ افغانی وہ  
 تورانی  
 تو اے شرمندہ ساحل اچھل کر  
 بے کران ہو جا<sup>10</sup>

In line with this thinking, Iqbal could not have anything against the non-Muslims of India. In fact, he himself stated:

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<sup>9</sup> Syed Abdul Wahid (Ed.), Thoughts and Reflections of Iqbal, Lahore, 1973, p. 99.

<sup>10</sup> Bang-i-Dara, p. 312.

It should be noted that the background of these verses is the misfortune of the Muslim world.

A community which is inspired by feelings of ill-will to-wards other communities is low and ignoble I entertain the highest respect for the customs, laws, religious and social institutions of other communities. Nay, it is my duty, according to the teaching of the Quran, even to defend their places of worship, if need be.<sup>11</sup>

It is true that in the context of the communal question Iqbal had been much disappointed by the recommendations of the Nehru Committee<sup>12</sup> as well as those of the Simon Commission. As he put it:

... there is a subtle difference of motive in the constitutions proposed by the pundits of India and the pundits of England. The pundits of India do not disturb the Central authority as it stands at present All that they desire is that this authority should become fully responsible to the Central Legislature which they maintain intact and where their majority will become further reinforced on the nominated element ceasing to exist. The pundits of England, on the other hand, realizing that democracy in the Centre tends to work contrary to their interests and is likely to absorb the whole power now in their bands, in case a further advance is made towards responsible government, have shifted the experience of democracy from the Centre to the provinces.<sup>13</sup>

But the All India Muslim Conference (originally also called the All-Parties Muslim Conference), of which Iqbal was a very prominent member,

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<sup>11</sup> Latif Ahmed Sherwani, cited, p. 9.

<sup>12</sup> Even some Hindu scholars have stated that the Nehru Report was unfair to the Muslims. For instance, Uma Kaura has written : ". . . his (Medial Nehru s) attitude shows that he was more concerned with placating the Hindu Mahasabha than with giving satisfaction to the Muslims. The main reason was that the lessons of the 1926 elections, when the Swaraj Party had met with serious challenge from candidates like Madan Mohan Malaviya and Lajpat Rai, who were sympathetic to the Mahasabha, were still fresh in his memory. He remained cautious throughout and seemed determined not to give an opportunity to the Mahasabha to increase its following at the cost of the Congress even though this meant losing a chance to satisfy a large section of Muslim leadership." Muslims and Indlan Natlonalism, Columbia, Mo., 1977, p. 165.

<sup>13</sup> Latif Ahmed Sherwani, cited, pp. 12-13.

had made at its session held on 31 December 1928 and 1 January 1929 some demands-for consideration by the Hindus. In March these demands were largely endorsed by Mohammad Ali Jinnah, President of the All-India Muslim League, in his 'Fourteen Points'. Iqbal thought that these demands were reasonable and in due course should be acceptable to the Hindus.

This is the background of Iqbal's address at the Allahabad session of the Muslim League in 1930. Iqbal then made two suggestions—a fact which has not received full attention from scholars. His first suggestion was:

The Muslim demand for the creation of Muslim India within India is... perfectly justified. The resolution of the All Parties Muslim Conference at Delhi is, to my mind, wholly inspired by this noble ideal of alharmonious whole which, instead of stifling the respective individualities of its component wholes, affords them chances of fully working out the possibilities that may be latent in them.<sup>14</sup>

Making his second suggestion, Iqbal said:

Personally I would go farther than the demands embodied in it [resolution of the All Parties Muslim Conference]. I would like to see the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sind and Baluchistan amalgamated into a single State. Self-government within the British Empire, or without the British Empire, the formation of a consolidated North-West Indian Muslim State appears to me to be the final destiny of the Muslims, at least of North-West India.<sup>15</sup>

In the context of this suggestion Iqbal also said that the predominantly non-Muslim districts of the Punjab should be excluded from it.

Iqbal himself made it plain that he was making to alternative suggestions: (i) as in the demands put forward by the All-India Muslim

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<sup>14</sup> Same, p. 9.

<sup>15</sup> Same, p. 10.

Conference and the All India Muslim League (at its sessions in 1924, 1925 and 1926, later incorporated in the 'Fourteen Points'), and (ii) a redistribution of the British Indian provinces.<sup>16</sup> The basic thought behind both suggestions was that the Indian Muslims were a people separate from other Indian peoples. In fact, Iqbal went to the extent of saying: "We are 70 millions and far more homogenous than any other people in India. Indeed the Muslims of India are the only Indian people who can fitly be described as a nation in the modern sense of the word."<sup>17</sup> The importance of this point can hardly be over-emphasized because it was on this basis that the Muslim League later demanded Pakistan.

Iqbal's own preference was for the second suggestion, because, according to him, it provided a permanent solution of the communal problem in India.<sup>18</sup> What Iqbal really meant was that in a consolidated north-western Muslim State it should be possible for the Muslims to order their collective life according to the principles of Islam, about which he was very keen. This keenness logically followed from his view that it is not possible "to retain Islam as an ethical ideal and to reject it as a polity in favour of national polities in which religious attitude is not permitted to play any part."<sup>19</sup> In fact, Iqbal believed, as he later said, "that which really matters is a man's faith, his culture, his historical tradition. These are the things which, in my eyes, are worth living for and dying for. .."<sup>20</sup> It should be added that Iqbal also thought that the "life of Islam as a cultural force in the country very largely depends on its centralization in a specified territory."<sup>21</sup>

At the same time Iqbal thought that non-Muslims should not have any serious objections to his suggestion. He assured non-Muslims that in the

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<sup>16</sup> Same, p. 19.

<sup>17</sup> Same, p. 23.

<sup>18</sup> Same, p. 19.

<sup>19</sup> Same, p. 7.

<sup>20</sup> Same, p. 28.

<sup>21</sup> Same, p. 10.



state which he was suggesting there would not be any kind of religious rule.<sup>22</sup> Instead it would, ensure fair treatment to them. As he put it later, Muslims, "in view of their past history and traditions, [would] prove themselves free from all pettiness of mind and narrowness of outlook."<sup>23</sup> Iqbal also thought that the creation of a state with a large Muslim majority would further secure the position of non-Muslims inasmuch as such a state would be in a position "to give a more effective protection to non-Muslim minorities within its area."<sup>24</sup>

Some non-Muslims thought that the real motive behind Iqbal's suggestion for a Muslim state in the north-west of India was cooperation with Muslim states to the west at the expense of residuary India. Iqbal himself noted that Srinivasa Sastri thought that the suggestion was actuated by a desire "to acquire means of exerting pressure in emergencies on the Government of India."<sup>25</sup> His categorical reply was that such thinking was incorrect and his suggestion had resulted solely from "a genuine desire for free development which is practically impossible under the type of unitary government contemplated by the nationalist Hindu politicians.,."<sup>26</sup>

Iqbal, in fact, thought that the suggested state was in the interests of both India and Islam:

For India it means security and peace resulting from an internal balance of power: for Islam 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 brine them into closer contact with its own original spirit and with the spirit of modern times.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Same, p. 11.

<sup>23</sup> Same, p. 221.

<sup>24</sup> Same, p. 10.

<sup>25</sup> Same, p. 11.

<sup>26</sup> Same.

<sup>27</sup> Same.

There is, however, much disagreement on the interpretation of what Iqbal suggested in his address. The well known historian Dr Ishtiaq Husain Qureshi, who also took a prominent part in the Pakistan movement, has argued: "Some writers have taken Iqbal to mean that he wanted only a consolidated Muslim unit within the confederation of India but this is incorrect. If that were so, he would not have mentioned self-government within the British empire or without it."<sup>28</sup> But Dr. K. K. Aziz, author/ editor of a number of volumes on Pakistan and the Pakistan movement, has expressed the view "It is one of the myths of Pakistani nationalism to saddle Iqbal with the parentage of Pakistan."<sup>29</sup>

The disagreement is largely due to the fact that while one scholar has been able to comprehend that the suggestion of a consolidated Muslim state emanated from a person who was both a politician and a visionary, the other scholar thinks that the originator of the suggestion was only a politician. In the view of this writer there is a clear hint in the suggestion that if a consolidated Muslim state was created in the immediate future, this would lead at some date in the future to the establishment of an independent Muslim state. This view is supported not only by Dr. Qureshi's argument but also by Iqbal's reference in his suggestion to the final destiny of the Muslims.

The vision of an independent Muslim state continued to recur to Iqbal for quite sometime in different ways. In reply to a letter of Dr. Edward Thompson published in The Times of London in which it had been stated that, if the north-west areas of India separated, the defence of residuary India would become very difficult, Iqbal stated in October 1931:

May I tell Dr. Thompson, in this passage I do not put forward a 'demand' for a Moslem state outside the British Empire but only a guess at

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<sup>28</sup> The Struggle for Pakistan, Karachi, 1965, p. 121.

<sup>29</sup> The Making of Pakistan, London, 1967, p. 54.

the possible outcome in the dim future of the mighty forces now shaping the destiny of the Indian subcontinent.<sup>30</sup>

At the third session of the Round Table Conference in 1932, when the scheme for a federation of India was being finalised, Iqbal suggested that the Indian provinces should become independent dominions, in direct relationship with the Secretary of State, there being no central government.<sup>31</sup> It should be noted that till 1931 it was widely believed that the 'Dominions' in the British Empire were not completely independent but the Statute of Westminster of December 1931 had clarified that in the matter of sovereignty the Dominions were in no way inferior to Britain.

This writer also thinks that Iqbal had his 1930 vision as well in mind when, during his London visit, at a meeting of the National League, he stated:

... as President of the All-India Muslim League. I suggested as a possible solution the formation of a large West Indian State. While this suggestion of mine was not embodied in the demand of the Muslims of India, my personal opinion still is that this is the only possible solution. I wait until experience reveals the wisdom or unwisdom of this suggestion.<sup>32</sup>

Similarly, in February 1933, it was Iqbal, the visionary, who stated that in one respect the deliberations of the Round Table Conference have been very satisfactory inasmuch as these deliberations "have given birth to a people who are at once new and ancient. . . Not even a farsighted historian can realise the full consequences of the birth of this 'new-ancient' people. I only hope that their leaders will remain alert and not allow the growth of self-

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<sup>30</sup> B. A. Dar (Ed.), *Letters and Writings of Iqbal*, Karachi, 1967, pp. 118-19.

<sup>31</sup> Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, *Pakistan or the Partition of India*, Lahore, 1976, p. 329 f. n.

<sup>32</sup> B. A. Dar, cited, p. 75.

consciousness among their people to be arrested by external forces, social or political."<sup>33</sup>

So far as the immediate future was concerned there can be no controversy about what Iqbal was asking for, irrespective of whether the existing provinces of India remained intact or these were redistributed as Iqbal preferred. He was asking for such safeguards in the - constitution of a united India as would make it possible for the Muslims to lead their lives according to the principles of Islam. In the address itself Iqbal recalled that the suggestion for a consolidated Muslim unit had earlier been put forward before the Nehru Committee but it had not been accepted on the ground that the proposed unit would be very unwieldy.<sup>34</sup> He also stated that "if the principle that the Indian Muslim is entitled to full and free development on the lines of his own culture and tradition in his own Indian home-lands is recognised as the basis of a permanent communal settlement, he will be ready to stake his all for the freedom of India."<sup>35</sup>

It is important to note that Muslim leaders at the first session of the Round Table Conference, which met in the winter of 1930-31, were also demanding such provisions in the future constitution as would enable the Muslims to keep their identity separate from that of the non-Muslims and would safeguard their special interests. Muslim demands did not look unreasonable to a number of non-Muslim delegates but in the absence of the Congress representatives at the Conference it seemed that there was not much point in reaching a settlement of the communal problem. At the second session of the Round Table Conference M. K. Gandhi was the sole spokesman of the Congress and he took the stand that the Congress alone represented the peoples of India.<sup>36</sup> He refused to consider even those demands of the Muslims and other minorities which they considered most

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<sup>33</sup> Latif Ahmed Sherwani, cited, p. 225.

<sup>34</sup> Same, p. 10.

<sup>35</sup> Same, p. 8.

<sup>36</sup> Sams, p. 32.

essential. Iqbal, himself a delegate at this session, later remarked: "We tried the majority and found them unwilling to recognize the safeguards which we can forego only at the risk of complete extinction as a nation determined to live its own life."<sup>37</sup>

Iqbal was naturally disappointed at Gandhi's attitude but he continued to hope that a Hindu-Muslim understanding on some basis was still possible. The basis he proposed was: complete provincial autonomy, equal status for all federal units, classification of subjects into two categories only—federal and provincial, unconditional separation of Sind from Bombay, one-third seats for the Muslims in the Central Legislature, and Muslim majorities in the Punjab and Bengal Assemblies.<sup>38</sup>

Iqbal reiterated his stand for a united federal India as late as December 1933 when, in a press statement, he declared:

The offer which His Highness the Agha Khan made to Mr. Gandhi two years ago still holds good. If under Pandit Nehru's leadership the Hindus or the Congress agree to the safeguards which Muslims believe to be necessary for their protection as an all-India minority, the Muslims are still ready to serve, in the Agha Khan's words, as camp-followers of the majority community in the country's political struggle.<sup>39</sup>

While Iqbal was busy suggesting measures to safeguard the position of Muslims in the constitution that was then being thrashed out, Choudhry Rahmat Ali, a student at Cambridge, started a powerful campaign for a completely independent Muslim state in the north of India in the immediate future. Rahmat Ali has, however, claimed that he had demanded the establishment of such a state as early as 1915. The demand, he says, he had

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<sup>37</sup> Same, p. 34.

<sup>38</sup> Same, p. 32.

<sup>39</sup> Same, p. 241.

put forward in his inaugural address at the Bazm-i-Shibli, which he had himself founded that year.<sup>40</sup>

In the context of Rahmat Ali's claim the following points have, however, to be noted:

1. He has himself stated that his belief that the territories in the north of India belonged to the Muslims was imparted to him by his father, that he grew with it and it grew with him, and that it became the "dominating passion" of his life.<sup>41</sup> Nevertheless, from 1916 for about 15 years he showed no activity although a number of important developments concerning the future of India took place during this period.

2. In December 1924 Lala Lajpat Rai had proposed the partitioning of the country into Hindu India and Muslim India and Muslim India included East Bengal also.<sup>42</sup> In spite of that suggestion, Rahmat All, like Iqbal, concerned himself only with north-western India, although the basic consideration before both was the future of Islam and Muslims in India and there were more Muslims in the east of India than in the north-west.<sup>43</sup>

3. Iqbal's address did not make much impression on the Muslim politicians but it led to some rethinking about the future of India amongst those Hindu leaders, British statesmen and intellectuals in India as well as Britain who studied it care-fully. In fact, it seems to this writer that Iqbal himself was invited to the second session of the Round Table Conference

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<sup>40</sup> Choudhry Rahmat Ali, Pakistan : The Fatherland of the Pak Natlon, Lahore, 1978, pp. 213-14.

<sup>41</sup> Same. p. 123.

<sup>42</sup> K. K. Aziz (Ed.), Complete Works of Rahmat All, Vol. I, Islamabad, 1978, p. xvi (Introduction).

<sup>43</sup> Including Kashmir, but excluding the non-Muslim majority districts of the Punjab, there were about 20 million Muslims out of a total population of some 26.5 millions in the north-west of India as compared with about 27 million Muslims in the contiguous Muslim majority districts of Bengal and the adjoining Muslim majority district of Sylhet in Assam out of a total population of about 39 millions.

largely because he had put forward some new ideas in his address. The possibility therefore cannot be ruled out that Iqbal's address and his other observations about a consolidated Muslim state contributed to Rahmat Ali's decision to start an active campaign in favour of an independent Muslim state in the north of India in the immediate future. In this context it is important to note that Rahmat Ali himself has paid a great tribute to Iqbal:

... it must be gratefully remembered that . . . Iqbal's suggestion for the amalgamation of the four provinces made a profound contribution to our cause. Though it infuriated our politicians and convulsed the Caste Hindus, it re-inspired our people to think in terms of the consolidation of our nation, revived the issue of our future, and riveted our gaze on our homelands in the north-west of 'India' <sup>44</sup>

Rahmat Ali's own explanation is that he started his campaign because he was bitterly opposed to the agreement of the Muslim delegates to the Round Table Conferences to the scheme of an Indian Federation. "I warned the Muslim delegates I knew that their action had obliterated the twelve centuries of our history, destroyed the very foundations of our heritage and crippled all hopes of the fulfilment of our mission."<sup>45</sup> Perhaps it would be more correct to say that Rahmat Ali could not convince any of the delegates of the soundness of his own scheme. Whatever the case, he started his campaign single-handed and, on 28 January 1933, he issued a declaration entitled *Now or Never*, in which it was stated that the demand for a separate Muslim Federation was "a matter of life and death for the Muslims of India" and that the "issue is now or never. Either we live or perish for ever."<sup>46</sup> He followed up this declaration by issuing and distributing pamphlets, tracts and handbills and also started a weekly which he called *Pakistan*. As a result of these various measures his scheme became known at least to the British

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<sup>44</sup> Choudhry Rahmat Ali, cited, pp. 220-21.

<sup>45</sup> Same, pp. 222-23.

<sup>46</sup> For the text of the declaration see K. K. Aziz, cited, pp. 5-10. The two quotes are from pp. 6 and 10.

statesmen concerned with the future of India and later in that year some members of the Joint Parliamentary Select Committee interrogated Muslim witnesses, who appeared before the Committee, about it.

But Muslim leaders were then convinced that the interests of the Indian Muslims could be properly safeguarded in a constitution based upon the federal principle, In fact, on various occasions they had already expressed their views on those lines. The Muslim witnesses before the Committee therefore called Pakistan "only a student's scheme", "chimerical and impracticable."<sup>47</sup>

Iqbal himself, as is evident from the extracts from his address and statements quoted earlier, was then committed to a federal constitution in the immediate future. His thinking must have been reinforced by the replies of the Muslim witnesses before the Select Committee. Small wonder, he decided not to leave any ambiguity about his position, and in his letter of 6 March 1934 to Maulana Raghīb Ahsan, stated: "I propose to create a Muslim province within the Indian federation ; the 'Pakistan' scheme of Rahmat Ali proposes a separate federation of Muslim provinces in the northwest of India outside the Indian federation. . ." It is significant that Iqbal wanted his position to be publicised through the newspapers.<sup>48</sup>

What Iqbal visualised in 1930 as a possibility in the distant future became a clear cut demand of the Indian Muslims within a decade, largely because of developments connected with the introduction of provincial autonomy, provided in the Government of India Act of 1935, as from April 1937. At this crucial moment in the history of India, the predominantly Hindu Congress decided to elect Jawaharlal Nehru to its key post of President. Nehru was a socialist and knew a great deal about international relations but not much about the affairs of his own country. As he himself said in his presidential address at the Lucknow session of the Congress in

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<sup>47</sup> Quoted in Rajendra Prasad, *India Divided*, Lahore, 1978, p. 207.

<sup>48</sup> Fascimile of letter published in Jung, 21 April 1982.



April 1936: "For many years now I have been a distant looker-on on this Indian scene where once I was an actor. .."<sup>49</sup> And in spite of the very conservative nature of the people whose destiny Nehru had been chosen to influence, he declared: "I am convinced that the only key to the solution of the world's problems and of India's problems lies in socialism ..."<sup>50</sup> He also declared that the communal problem was "after all, a side issue, and it can have no real importance in the larger scheme of things."<sup>51</sup> A few weeks later he expressed the view that "the communal problem was the creation of a third party."<sup>52</sup>

Inasmuch as it was not then known how popular the Congress was among the Indian peoples, Muslim leaders did not take much notice of such statements. But the statements of Nehru and his socialist nominees in the Congress Working Committee created a rift in the Congress leadership itself. Rajendra Prasad, one of the leading right wing leaders, wrote to Nehru: "We have got many difficulties and problems which baffle solution. The country has not yet found a solution of the Hindu-Muslim problem in spite of the greatest efforts." In these circumstances, Rajendra Prasad posed the question, "is it practical politics to say that all our communal and international differences will vanish in no time if we can concentrate our attention on economic problems and solve them on socialistic lines?"<sup>53</sup> Indeed, so wide became the rift that at the end of June Rajendra Prasad, C. Rajagopalachari, Jairamdas Doulatram, Jamnalal Bajaj, Vallabhbhai Patel, J. B. Kripalani and S. D. Dev, members of the Working Committee, tendered their resignations and wrote to Nehru: "We are of [the] opinion that . . . through your speeches and those of . . . other socialists colleagues and the acts of other socialists who have been emboldened by the speeches we have referred to the

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<sup>49</sup> Dorothy Norman (Ed.), *Nehru-The First Sixty Years*, Vol. I, London, 1965, p. 425.

<sup>50</sup> Same, p. 433.

<sup>51</sup> Same, p. 442.

<sup>52</sup> Quoted from *The Civil and Military Gazette (Lahore)* in C. H. Philips and Mary Doreen Wainright (Eds.), *The Partition of India*. London, 1970, p. 254.

<sup>53</sup> Same, p. 255.

Congress organisations has been weakened throughout the country without any compensating gain."<sup>54</sup> Nehru was naturally perturbed and himself offered to resign the Presidentship. -

The rift was, however, healed on the intervention of Gandhi who was held in very high esteem both by Nehru and his right wing colleagues. With unity restored in leadership the Congress was able to launch a powerful election campaign, which proved very successful inasmuch as in about two-thirds of India it won a majority of seats in the provincial assemblies. The success was even beyond the expectations of the Congress leaders themselves.

It is true that the Congress succeeded only in the Hindu majority provinces and there also it fared very badly in the case of Muslim seats.<sup>55</sup> But this failure did not disturb Nehru because he thought: "We failed because we had long neglected working among the Muslim masses and we could not reach them in time."<sup>56</sup>

Thrilled with the election results, Nehru declared at the Convention of Congress Members of the Provincial Assemblies held in March 1937: "We have too long thought in terms of pacts and compromises between communal leaders and neglected the people behind them. That is a discredited policy and I trust that we shall not revert to it. And yet some people still talk of the Muslims as a group dealing with the Hindus or others as a group, a medieval conception which has no place in the modern world. We deal with economic groups today and the problems of poverty and

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<sup>54</sup> Dorothy Norman, cited, p. 454.

<sup>55</sup> The Congress won 16 seats out of a total of 36 Muslim seats in the Assembly of the Muslim majority N. W.F.P. Province where it had since long been allied with the Muslim Red Shirt organisation, in the remaining 10 provincial Assemblies, out of a total of 446 Muslim seats. Congress won only 11 seats.

<sup>56</sup> Dorothy Norman, cited, p. 479.

unemployment and national freedom are common for the Hindu, the Muslim, the Sikh and the Christian."<sup>57</sup>

To make the Congress popular among the Muslims asked all Congress Committees in the provinces to make special efforts to enroll Muslim members. The Central make Committee set up a new department to deal with Congress Muslims. Notices were circulated to all district and local committees to substitute Urdu for Hindi for areas where there were large Muslim populations.<sup>58</sup> Towards the Muslim League, the only All-India party of the Muslims, Nehru adopted an attitude of contempt.

He thought that it was a religious body and could not participate in politics. He had the Muslim League in mind when he declared that "the time has gone when religious groups as such can take part in the political and economic struggle. That may have been so in the medieval times: it is inconceivable today "<sup>59</sup>

Nehru's efforts to win over the Muslim masses for the Congress and his contempt for the Muslim League startled Muslim leaders, more particularly because it became apparent to them that the Congress leadership was aiming at the merger of the Muslims in one Indian nation, which would be based on the values of the much larger Hindu community.

Iqbal was bound to react more strongly than any other Muslim leader because he was not only greatly dedicated to Islam but also possessed unbounded faith in the capacity of Muslims to make their contribution for the good of mankind. Some two decades back he had written in the *Rumuz-i-Bekhudi*:

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<sup>57</sup> Same.

<sup>58</sup> Congress circular of 31 March 1937. Uma Kaura, cited, pp. 109.10.

<sup>59</sup> Quoted from *The Times of India* in same, p. 110.

تانه خيزد بانگ حق  
از عالمے  
گر مسلمانى  
نياساى دمسے  
مى نه داني آيه ام  
الكتاب  
امت عادل ترا آمد  
خطاب  
آب و تاب چهره ايام  
تو  
در جهان شايد على  
الاقوام تو  
جلوه در تاريخى ايام  
كن  
آنچه ير تو كامل آمد  
عام<sup>60</sup> كن

His faith in his co-religionists had remained unshaken and about the time Nehru had started his Muslim mass contact programme, Iqbal was writing:

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<sup>60</sup> Kulliyat-i-Iqbal (Farm), Lahore, 1975, pp. 139-40.

اگر گردوں یہ کام او  
نہ گردد  
بکام خود به گرداند  
زمین را<sup>61</sup>

This is not to suggest that Iqbal was not interested in the material well-being of people on which Nehru was laying so much emphasis. In fact, as early as 1920, in a letter to Gandhi, Iqbal had stated: "Situated as we are, political independence must be preceded by economic independence and in this respect the Muslims of India are far behind other communities of this country. Their principal need is not literature and philosophy but technical education, which would make them economically independent."<sup>62</sup> In his address to the All-India Muslim Conference in 1932, Iqbal had emphasized the need for the formation of youth leagues which "must specially devote themselves to social service, customs reform, commercial organization of the community and economic propaganda in towns and villages, especially in the Punjab, where enormous indebtedness of Muslim agriculturists cannot be allowed to wait for the drastic remedies provided by agrarian upheavals."<sup>63</sup> In 1937 Iqbal wrote to Jinnah: "Personally I believe that a political organization which gives no promise of improving the lot of the average Muslim cannot attract our masses. . . And the whole future of the League depends on the League's activity to solve this question [of Muslim poverty]."<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Same, p. 1024.

<sup>62</sup> Latif Ahmed Sherwani, cited, p. 203.

<sup>63</sup> Same, p. 41.

<sup>64</sup> Letters of Iqbal to Jinnah, Lahore, 1974 reprint, pp. 17-18.

But Iqbal could not reconcile to Nehru's atheistic socialism. It is admitted that at times Iqbal has spoken well of socialism. But this is only in the context of one of its aspects, that of relieving the workers of the oppression of capitalists:

بندہ مزدور کو جا کر مرا پیغام دے  
خضر کا پیغام کیا ہے یہ پیام کائنات  
اے کر تجھ کو کہا گیا سرمایہ دار  
حیلہ گر  
شاخ آہو پر رہی صدیوں تلک تری  
برات  
دست دولت آفرین کو مزد یوں  
ملتی رہی  
اہل ثروت ، جیسے دیتے ہیں  
غریبوں کو زکات<sup>65</sup>

The basic approach of socialism—its concern only with the material well-being of man—was unacceptable to Iqbal:

غریباں گم کردہ اند

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<sup>65</sup> Bang-i-Dara, p. 297.

افلاک را  
درشکم جویند جان  
پاک را  
رنگ و بو از تن نگیرد  
جان پاک  
جزبه تن کارے ندارد  
اشتراک  
دین آں پیغمبر حق نا  
شناس  
بر مساوات شکم دارد  
اساس<sup>66</sup>

Iqbal believed that the unity of man could not be bifurcated into spirit and matter:

تن و جان را دو تا گفتن  
کلام است  
تن و جان را دو تا دیدن

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<sup>66</sup> Javed Namah, 1959 reprint, p. 69.

In Iqbal's view the major purpose of the State itself is to develop the spirit of man: "There is no such thing as a profane world. All this immensity of matter constitutes a scope for the self-realization of spirit. AU is holy ground. The State, according to Islam, is only an effort to realize the spiritual in a human organization."<sup>68</sup>

In view of his failing health, Iqbal could not actively oppose Nehru's programme. He therefore appealed to Jinnah to save the Indian Muslims from Nehru's socialism. In March 1937 Iqbal wrote: "It is absolutely necessary to tell the world both inside and outside India that the economic problem is not the only problem in the country. From the Muslim point of view the cultural problem is of much greater consequence to most Indian Muslims. At any rate it is not less important than the economic problem."<sup>69</sup> In May Iqbal wrote that the solution of the problem of Muslim poverty lay "in the enforcement of the Law of Islam and its further development in the light of modern ideas" and that "in order to make it possible for Muslim India to solve the problems, it is necessary to redistribute the country and to provide one or more Muslim states with absolute majorities."<sup>70</sup> Finally, in June Iqbal wrote: "Why should not the Muslims of North-West India and Bengal be considered as nations entitled to self-determination just as other nations in India and outside India are?"<sup>71</sup> Iqbal's letters no doubt influenced Jinnah's thinking.

In May, when suggesting the redistribution of the country, Iqbal had also posed the question: "Don't you think that the time for such a demand

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<sup>67</sup> Kulliyat-i-Iqbal (Forst), p. 547.

<sup>68</sup> The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, Lahore, 1975, p. 155.

<sup>69</sup> Letters of Iqbal to Jinnah, cited, p. 14.

<sup>70</sup> Same, pp. 18-19.

<sup>71</sup> Same, p. 21.



has already arrived?"<sup>72</sup> The time had in fact arrived and although Iqbal did not live long enough to see the Muslim League adopt his suggestion, in October 1938 1 Muslim leaders from the platform of the League itself began to talk in terms of a separate Muslim state. At the Sind Provincial 1 Muslim League Conference, at which Jinnah presided, some League leaders put forward a resolution in which it was stated that "India may be divided into two Federations, viz: the Federation of Muslim States and the Federation of non-Muslim States."<sup>73</sup> In March 1919, in his presidential address at the Divisional Muslim League Conference at Meerut, the General Secretary of the League, Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan, stated that if the Hindus and Muslims could not live together in peace, they should agree to divide the country.<sup>74</sup> A year later, at the annual session of the Muslim League held at Lahore, a resolution was adopted in which it was demanded that geographically contiguous areas of India should be so demarcated 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>75</sup>

It was in the fitness of things that Jinnah acknowledged the soundness of Iqbal's thinking and his great contribution to determining the best solution of the difficult problem of the Indian Muslims. Wrote Jinnah in 1942: "His (Iqbal's) views were substantially in consonance with my own and had finally led me to the same conclusions as a result of careful examination and study of the constitutional problems facing India and found expression in due course in the united will of Muslim India as adumbrated in the Lahore Resolution of the All-India Muslim League..."<sup>76</sup> Two years later Jinnah stated

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<sup>72</sup> Same, p. 19.

<sup>73</sup> Quoted in C. H. Philips and Mary Doreen Wainright, cited, p. 261.

<sup>74</sup> *Khutba-i-Sadarat*, Delhi, 1939, p. 11.

<sup>75</sup> Latif Ahmed Sherwani (Ed.), *Pakistan Resolution to Pakistan, 1940-47*, Karachi, 1969, p. 21.

<sup>76</sup> *Letters of Iqbal to Jinnah*, cited, pp. 6-7 (Foreword).

that Iqbal 'was one of the few who originally thought over the feasibility of carving out of India . . . an Islamic state in the North-west and North-east zones which are historical homelands of Muslims."<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Jamiluddin Ahmad (Ed ), Speeches and Writings of Mr. Jinnah, Vol. II, Lahore, 1976, p. 147.