

# Muhammad Ali Jinnah: A Transformation from an Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim Unity to a Stubborn Communalist for Creating Pakistan Through the Tragic Partition of The Sub-continent

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**Abstract** - Muhammad Ali Jinnah is considered to be the most divisive character and figure for the tragedy of the sub-continental history. He is still considered by many as the villain who was solely responsible for the creation of Pakistan. It's a tragedy for the sub-continental history that a very successful barrister who did not have any kind of religious biasness or religious bigotry of any kind in his earlier and almost entire life eventually became one of the topmost stubborn communalist for the creation of a homeland for the sub-continental Muslims by vivisection of the great land i.e. undivided India. Still his activities and life history is an enigma to different scholars of history. His legacy is a mixed legacy of trust, inter-community dreams, unity as well as mistrust, betrayal and antagonism among two different substantially existent sister communities in the Indian subcontinent who lived together side by side for centuries under different compulsions under the same sky. The vague and uncertain times of the last and ending days of the British rule in India, the clamour for power for the two major communities and their conflicting and sometimes very opposing interests, their mistrust, disbelief, low confidence in each other resulted in the tragic partition. The person from whom high expectations were made from both the communities eventually became a person meant and made for a particular community on the lines of extreme communalism and eventually the course of the sub-continental history had fallen in a tragic quagmire of mistrust, antagonism among two major communities. The legacy of that fateful tragedy called Indian Partition still haunts the sub-continent. His persona thought of a permanent solution for both the communities but eventually the same tragic history of partition never could fulfill the overall general aspirations and good healthy political or interfaith environments of trust in the subcontinent. This paper tries to get into the persona of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the creator of Pakistan.

**Keywords** - Communal Politics, Muslim Communalism, Hindu Communal Politics and Fundamentalism, Hindu Hegemony, Insecurity and Fear of Minority Muslims, Undivided India, United India, Rapprochement, Harmony, Cooperation, Antagonism

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## INTRODUCTION

The term "Quaid" is an Arabic term meaning "Commander" or "Leader", a person who is a servant of his people and in the Indian subcontinent the title of "Quaid-e-Azam" (The Great Leader) is used with reference to the Father of Pakistan, Muhammad Ali Jinnah. A tall, thin and elegant gentleman with a monocle on a grey silk cord became one of the most controversial and sophisticated politician. A giant who stood apart from the rest of his Muslim brethren became an indisputable leader and eventually he

became the party he represented, The Muslim League.

This man who started off as being called a symbol of Hindu-Muslim unity and ended up being termed as a "Villain", "Traitor" and "Disruptor of India" remains a mystery and enigma till date. He was never that religious person, didn't have an iota of religious narrow mindedness and bigotry in his character; was a very liberal person on multiplicity of dimensions. But at the end of the day with his almost single-handed effort and strategy, he created a new nation called Pakistan by tragically

dividing India. He promised a solution among major two communities in the sub-continent out of his actions, but it eventually became tragic and illusory. The sub-continent is still on a burning furnace on Hindu-Muslim question and other issues.

## **EARLY YEARS**

He was the oldest of seven kids born to rich trader Jinnahbhai Poonja and his wife Mithibai. Members of his family were Khojas, a caste of Hindus who converted to Islam centuries ago and were followers of the Aga Khan. Although Jinnah claimed he was born on December 25, 1876, documents from his alma mater in Karachi (Pakistan) show that he was really born on October 20, 1875.

Jinnah was first educated at home before being sent to what was then called the Sind Madrasat al-Islam and is now known as the Sindh Madressatul Islam University in Karachi in 1887. After that he continued his education at the Christian Missionary Society High School (also in Karachi), where he was able to successfully complete the University of Bombay's matriculation exams at the age of 16. (now University of Mumbai, in Mumbai, India). His father sent him to England for business training at the suggestion of an English acquaintance. But Jinnah was set on pursuing a career in law and decided to enroll in law school. His parents set him up with an early bride before he departed for England, as was the norm at the period.

He moved to London and became a member of Lincoln's Inn, a London-based legal society. In 1895, when he was just 19, he was admitted to practice law. Jinnah's wife and mother both passed away while he was in London, leaving him with two devastating losses. And yet, he not only finished his official education but also studied the British political system by making regular trips to the House of Commons. Jinnah moved to London in 1892, the year that William E. Gladstone became prime minister for the fourth time. Gladstone's liberalism had a profound effect on Jinnah. Like many others, Jinnah was invested in India's future and its youth. Jinnah and other Indian students campaigned tirelessly for the Parsi politician Dadabhai Naoroji's election to the British Parliament. Naoroji was a prominent Indian nationalist. Eventually, their hard work paid off as Naoroji was elected as the first Indian to serve in Parliament.

Upon his return to Karachi in 1896, Jinnah discovered that his father's company had incurred losses and that he was now completely on his own. He settled in Bombay (now Mumbai) to start his legal career, and he toiled at it for many years before he was recognized as a credible attorney.

Nearly a decade later, he began making an overt effort to enter politics. He was a guy with little interests outside of the law and politics. He was not a

fanatic, though; he identified as a Muslim in the broadest sense but was not particularly interested in the many sects within the religion. His interest in women was also restricted; he married Rattenbai (Rutti), the daughter of a Bombay Parsi businessman named Sir Dinshaw Petit, in 1918 despite facing fierce resistance from Petit and other family members. Jinnah and Rutti had one daughter together, Dina, but their marriage was ultimately unsuccessful. Fatima, his sister, was the one who comforted him and kept him company.

By the turn of the twentieth century, however, a rising number of Muslims were convinced that it was in their best interest to maintain their own culture rather than merge into an India that was, in all practical respects, Hindu. The Muslim League of India (All-India Muslim League) was established in 1906 primarily to defend Muslim rights. But Jinnah kept his distance. Only after being convinced by reliable sources that the league was just as committed to the political liberation of India as the Congress Party was, did Jinnah join the league in 1913. In the wake of the formation of the Indian Home Rule League, he was tasked with leading the charge in Bombay and was eventually elected president of the city's chapter.

## **PLAYING AN AMBASSADOR OF HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY**

The Lucknow Pact of 1916 was the product of Jinnah's attempts to foster communal unity and create a common enterprise for the two main political parties. Jinnah followed the principles of his mentors, Gopal Krishna Gokhale and Dadabhai Naoroji, and laid stress on Hindu-Muslim unity. His belief was that the foundation of the Congress party were on the basis of 'equal treatment' of all communities and 'no reservation shall be made for any community'. He opposed the partition of Bengal and thought the division of the province would lead to further strife between the communities. He vehemently opposed communal electorate and was against its inclusion in Morley-Minto reforms. His strong ties within the Congress and his fight for Muslims Wakfs (Trust) Bill in 1913 through the Viceroy's council won him widespread praise.

The Quaid was staunchly against the British and their divisive politics and the happenings in other Muslim countries aroused the Indian Muslims and the attitude of both the communities with regards to the British were moving towards a common goal. The English were trying to take the League away from the Congress but the daunting leader sought to bring them closer.

The term "the finest ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unification" was first used to describe Jinnah by Gokhale, who recognized his efforts to unite Hindus and Muslims politically. In large part due to his efforts, the Congress Party and the Muslim League now convene their annual sessions simultaneously in order to better encourage communication and collaboration between the two groups. First meeting in 1915 in Bombay, the two groups signed the Lucknow Pact in 1916. As part of the agreement, the two groups signed up on a plan for constitutional change that would become their common demand of the British government. Separate electorates, which the government had previously granted the Muslims in 1909 but which Congress had so far avoided giving in on, was the most significant concession the Muslims were able to get.

He is said to have reiterated that the key to progress in India lay in 'goodwill, concord, harmony and cooperation between the two sister-communities in order to produce a force which no power on earth can resist'. The separate electorate was construed as being disrespectful to the Muslim community as well as demoralising for the State and emphasized upon them to rise above being at the mercy of the British and learn to have self-respect. The five years of association between Jinnah and the League, their proximity with the English was replaced with a new-found friendship with the Congress.

For Jinnah, unity must exist amongst the two communities for the growth of the nation but disagreed with the Gandhian way of seeking unity and salvation and thus, opposed the Khilafat Movement. Gandhi's attempts to spiritualize the independence struggle alarmed Jinnah, who worried that religion would be dragged into politics. After the Khilafat and Non-cooperation campaign failed during the years Gandhi withdrew from national politics, religiously inspired political parties and the usage of religious symbols increased. Movements such as the *shuddhi* and the *tabligh* created further rift between the two communities and the efforts of leaders such as Tilak, Dadabhai, Gokhale and Jinnah were all in vain. Jinnah disapproved of Gandhi's backing of the Khilafat movement because he believed it dangerous to mix religion and politics. The problem of Khilafat had nothing to do with the battle for Swaraj.

Jinnah abandoned the league and the Congress Party in 1920 due to his disagreement with Gandhi's noncooperation campaign and his mainly Hindu political philosophy. He distanced himself from major political groups for a while. He maintained his faith in the power of Hindu-Muslim harmony and the efficacy

of constitutional means to attain political aims. After leaving Congress, he utilized the Muslim League to continue spreading his ideas. However, Congress and the religiously motivated Muslim Khilafat movement eclipsed the Muslim League and Jinnah throughout the 1920s.

After the non-cooperation movement collapsed and Hindu revivalist groups emerged, causing animosity and violence between Hindus and Muslims, the Muslim League started to lose power and cohesiveness, and Muslim leaders in the provinces began to create their own parties to meet their constituents' demands.

## **PARTING OF WAYS**

In the 1920s and 1930s, Jinnah's main goal was to facilitate peace between Hindus and Muslims. To this end, he advocated for reforms in the predominantly Muslim Sindh region of Bombay province, increased rights for minorities, a one-third representation for Muslims in the central legislature, and the separation of the Sindh region from the rest of the Bombay province. He also participated in the Round Table Conference in London (1930-32). His "14 points" included these and other proposals. Frustrated, he did little to alter the suggestions of the Nehru Committee (1928) about Muslim quotas in elections and legislative representation. It was an unusual situation in which he found himself. Many Muslims felt his approach was overly patriotic, putting Muslim interests at risk, and the Congress Party refused to make any concessions to moderate Muslims' requests.

The period after 1922 saw the rise of Hindu Mahasabha as a national party and further division between the two communities. During this period, rioting was on the rise and literature was published by communal forces on each side to further disrupt the harmony within the communities. Communal atmosphere gave rise to the politics of murder. In these troubling times, Jinnah declared a call for peace and abhorred those who in the name of Islam committed such heinous crimes. He even put forth the Delhi Proposal which called for a separation of Sindh province from Bombay in return for Muslims accepting joint electorate but maintaining their demand for 33 % representation at the Central Legislature. His proposals were viewed as an attempt to revive Pan-Islamism by many but he reiterated his stance as a nationalist and his loyalty to India as a foremost priority. He believed in the ideals of liberalism and maintained throughout his life that religious freedom should never be compromised at any cost. His demand for

a Sindh's separation was based on demographics. Muslims in India formed 23% of the population and 23% of the population of Sindh was Hindus.

In August 1928, a committee appointed by the All Parties Conference put forward the Nehru Report, as it was headed by Motilal Nehru, to determine the principles of the Constitution of India. The committee report heavily criticised the Lucknow Pact and stated that separate electorates were bad for the national spirit:

*"A minority must remain a minority whether any seats are reserved for it or not".*

The report rejected fears of Muslims being dominated by a Hindu majority and considered it to be 'illogical'. Jinnah suggested a few amendments to the committee report such as the demand for one-third representation at Central Legislature, residuary power of provinces over centre and Muslim representation in Bengal and Punjab should be on population basis. Jinnah had anticipated that the Congress would give in to his minor requests for the sake of the nationalist cause, but the advent of religion in politics had corrupted even the finest of men. His suggestions were rejected and his reaction to the same was stated in one sentence:

*"This is the parting of the ways."*

He drafted his own 14-point constitution which talked about India as a federation with provinces having residuary powers. In his 14 point constitution he made a case for federation in order to attract provincial support and at the same time mentioned adequate representation for the minorities, be it Hindus or Muslims, in the provinces. He wished to reduce the dominance of Muslim politics by Bengalis and Punjabis by arguing for 3 new Muslim provinces to reduce their power and vociferously supported religious liberty unconditionally. The 14-point constitution can be seen as an attempt by Jinnah to regain favour amongst his community members as he feared that there was no sense of security for the Muslims and was dejected by the apathy of the other national parties. This 14-point constitution was an answer by Jinnah to his critics in the Muslim community and was an attempt to unite Muslims of India under one umbrella and to free them from their differences on the basis of sect.

## **LEAVING POLITICS FOR A WHILE**

During the 1920s and 1930s, the Muslim League was, indeed, a fractured organization. The Punjab

Muslim League broke away from Jinnah's administration. Jinnah moved to England out of disgust. He stayed in London, focusing on his Privy Council career from 1930 until 1935. However, when amendments to the constitution were on the horizon, he was convinced to return to his homeland and lead a revitalized Muslim League.

Fatima Jinnah moved to England with her brother in 1931. From that point on, she would be there for Muhammad Ali Jinnah every step of the way as he aged and developed the lung illnesses that would eventually prove fatal. She followed him across the country and became a trusted companion and adviser while they lived together. Dina Jinnah, daughter of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, was educated in both the United Kingdom and India. Dina's marriage to Neville Wadia, a member of a wealthy Parsi family, caused tensions between Jinnah and his estranged wife. Dina pointed out to Jinnah that he had previously married a lady who was not reared in Islam when he encouraged her to marry a Muslim. Although Jinnah and his daughter maintained friendly communications, their relationship was difficult, and she did not visit Pakistan until after his death.

## **RETURN TO POLITICS**

There was a renaissance of Indian Muslim nationalism in the early 1930s, culminating in the Pakistan Declaration. By 1933, Indian Muslims, particularly those in the United Provinces, were calling for Jinnah to resume his role as head of the dormant Muslim League. Although he continued to hold the title of president of the League, in April of 1933 he decided not to fly to India to preside over the session, explaining in a letter that he could not return to India until December.

Liaquat Ali Khan, who would later become Jinnah's political partner and Pakistan's first Prime Minister, was one among those who met with Jinnah to ask for his release. In response to Jinnah's request, Liaquat met with a large group of Muslim political leaders to ratify his advice to Jinnah. Jinnah sold his home in Hampstead and shut down his law profession in Britain before moving to the subcontinent in early 1934. However, he continued to travel back and forth between London and India for business during the following several years.

Even though he was in London at the time, in October 1934 the Muslims of Bombay chose Jinnah to represent them in the Central Legislative Assembly. The British Parliament's Government of India Act 1935 handed extensive



power to India's provinces, with a weak central parliament in New Delhi, which had little jurisdiction over such things as foreign policy, defence, and most of the budget. However, the Viceroy retained absolute authority and could still dissolve parliament and govern by decree. The League supported the plan with concerns due to the ineffectiveness of the parliament. In the 1937 provincial elections, the Congress had a significant advantage, and the League lost even in areas where Muslims made up a majority of the population. It did gain a majority of the Muslim seats in Delhi, but could not form a government elsewhere, though it was part of the governing coalition in Bengal. The Congress and its allies constituted the administration even in the North-West Frontier Province (N.W.F.P.), where the League won no seats despite the fact that practically all people were Muslim.

According to Jaswant Singh, "the events of 1937 had a significant, almost a traumatic impact upon Jinnah". Muslim voters had failed to unite, with the issues Jinnah hoped to bring forward lost amid factional fighting, despite his conviction for twenty years that Muslims could protect their rights in a united India through separate electorates, provincial boundaries drawn to preserve Muslim majorities, and other protections of minority rights. In his discussion of Muslim political views, Singh cites the impact of the 1937 elections, "Non-Congress Muslims were hit with the harsh truth of their near-total political helplessness when the Congress established a government with practically all of the Muslim MLAs sitting on the Opposition benches. A realization hit them like a flash of lightning: even if the Congress didn't win any Muslim seats, as long as it gained an absolute majority in the House on the basis of the general seats, it would establish a government totally on its own."

Over the course of the next two years, Jinnah campaigned for League membership among Muslims. He successfully advocated for the Muslim-led Bengali and Punjabi provincial administrations to be given a voice in the federal government in New Delhi. He advocated for the decrease of League membership fees, which now stand at only two annas (1/8 of a rupee), halving the amount people had to pay to become members of the Congress. According to the model of the Congress, he reorganized the League by vesting most of its authority in a Working Committee. According to Liaquat, the League had three million two-anna members by December 1939.

## THE PAKISTAN DEMAND

The parting of ways in late 1920's, rise of communal parties and a failure to establish a link between the two major parties resulted in a sea-change in Jinnah's ideas and ideals. His fear of the rise of Hindu hegemony, dominance over Muslims after the withdrawal of the British led him to divide the people of the country and the nation. The demand for Pakistan could not be attributed to a single isolated incident but to a long chain of events which led to nothing but disappointment in the eyes of every nationalist.

The Lahore resolution passed in 1940 in the Muslim League, often termed as the Pakistan resolution did not even mention the word Pakistan. The resolution called for an amalgamation of Muslim lands in the North-West of India and in the Far-East to set up autonomous and sovereign provinces which would be part of a greater Indian federation. However, no formal demand for a separate nation or Pakistan was ever raised. The demand initially may have been a bargaining counter, where Jinnah sought to empower his party and his position in politics in a federation of independent Indian states. Jinnah despised the Congress more than any other political party because of its partisan opinions, politics and always worked under the garb of secularism. He never criticised the Hindu community but the politics of the party which claimed to be the representative of India. Jinnah's demands were merely sought recognition to the rights of minorities. After his adoption of a stiff Muslim stance against the Congress, he completely changed his attire and lifestyle.

To further explain the concept of Pakistan, Jinnah proposed the two-nation theory. Speaking during the Lahore meeting, he said:

*"The Hindu faith and the Muslim faith are two distinct religious traditions with distinct ideas, cultural practices, and literary canons. Neither group has a common diet nor engages in intermarriage; instead, they represent two distinct cultures with fundamentally at odds worldviews.."*

This idea can be put forth as 'Jinnah's social contract'. The theory of his social contract concentrates upon the fact that the two communities in India are entirely different from each other. The traditions, customs and cultures of

the two communities disparate drastically and a call for a union shall be futile. He based his arguments on the history of India in which many a times the 'hero' or 'conqueror' of one is the enemy of the other. The 'overlapping' history of the two communities was at the crux of their difference and they were the enemies of one another in each other's historical imagination. Thus, for the progress of both the communities it was ideal for them to be uncoupled that had become intertwined in history. He called for a desertion to the conflict-ridden history of India in order to start over and the British Raj need be seen as a state of nature through which the two nations shall rise in a negotiated settlement under which they must respect the identities and sovereignty of each other. He called for both these nations to be termed as 'Hindustan' and 'Pakistan', neither of whom would claim any link to the history of India. Jinnah argued that this form of a 'negotiated' settlement had to be reached and a detachment from baggage of history was needed for the development of these nations. Even in his Constituent Assembly Speech on 11<sup>th</sup> August 1947, he recognised the creation of both the nations and made little to no reference to that past of India. Nehru on the other hand hardly mentioned Pakistan and continued to use historical references in his famous speech, "Tryst with Destiny"

There were many critics of Jinnah who stated that great Muslim rulers of India such as Aurangzeb, Akbar or Tipu Sultan never called for a division of India to which he simply replied by stating that he doubted if Hindus would call such rulers 'great men' whose rule they willingly accepted.

His idea of Pakistan was a contemporary nation-state with a Muslim majority who would accept people with different religious and regional backgrounds. Pakistan's original purpose was never to be a "Islamic state," but rather a "Muslim Zion" to protect Muslim rights and freedoms. There was never any suggestion that Pakistan was a theocracy, and Jinnah's goals for the country explicitly excluded religious leaders and their strict interpretation of Islam. He reviled the history of Muslim rulers in India and considered them to be imperialists just like the British. He emphasised on the need for development of modern political thought rather than indulge in the supposed glory Muslim rulers. In effect, Jinnah, as a spokesman for Muslim League practised a strict separation between religious experience and political development and the League along with the civil-military bureaucracy generally concurred with his views. He never called for a transfer of population between the two nations and had insisted upon the

Hindus in Pakistan to stay put rather than cross borders. But unfortunately, history spoke otherwise.

## CONCLUSION

The tall, thin, super successful barrister, resolute person who in his initial years in united India's politics and freedom struggle in colonial times could never think other than about Hindu-Muslim unity and rapprochement among these two sister communities, tragically and eventually came out to be a stubborn communalist and reactionary to make Pakistan a reality as a separate nation for sub-continental Muslims through the vivisection of united India in 1947. Jinnah never joined a religious community because God and the Quran had no place in his political ideology. He often broke Islamic rules by eating meat, drinking alcohol, and smoking cigars. Because of his flagrant disregard for Islamic law, many Muslims held the view that he was an infidel and referred to him as "Kafr-i-Azam" (Great Infidel). As a result, his legacy is rather baffling. Everyone agrees that Muhammad Ali Jinnah was pivotal in the rise of the Muslim League as the representative voice of the Muslim world, in the formulation of the Pakistan demand for independent statehood for the Muslim majority provinces of North-Western and Eastern India in March 1940, and in the subsequent establishment of the independent but severely diminished state of Pakistan in August 1947, as a result of the Partition of India. His impact on sub-continental history is multifaceted. Indians frequently see him as the great criminal and traitor, whereas Pakistanis view him as the Quid-i-Azam, Great Leader, or Father of the Nation. Many researchers, both domestic and foreign, continue to find him puzzling, and he is always being re-examined from a variety of angles.

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