



Iqbal's Allahabad Address and Its Impact on Muslim Political Struggle in Indian Sub-Continent

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An independent state ensures the protection of the religious, social, political, economic, and cultural identities of its nationals. Such a state had become a dream of the Indian Muslims who could not evolve the mentioned identities with Hindus even after spending many centuries together. The absence of religious compatibility, social harmony, political similarity, economic equality, and cultural conciliation never allowed them to address the Indian cause of liberty from the British in collaboration. Instead, the politics of agitation of the narrow-minded Hindus gave way to Muslim nationalism to flourish which was capitalized by the Muslim leaders who later obtained a separate homeland for the security of their identities. The pivotal role of none of the Muslim leaders can be denied in this struggle. But, Muhammad Iqbal-a poet cum politician has carved out his name in the political history of the Sub-Continent in an innovative manner. The famous Allahabad Address of 1930 is the reflection of his political wisdom in which he seems to demand a separate state for the Muslims. This research article has attempted to explore how the Allahabad Address proved a milestone in Muslim political history. It has explained that the particular address provided a pace to the Muslim struggle for independence from the British as well as the Hindus. The directionless factions of the Muslim League (ML) were reintegrated to break the shackles. Barely three years later, they suggested the name "Pakistan" for a state purposed by Iqbal in 1930 and in 1940 Iqbal's idea of a separate Muslim state was publically endorsed by Muhammad Ali Jinnah and other Muslim leaders. Sticking with this idea, within no time, the Muslims materialized the dream of Iqbal until August 1947.

Keywords: Sub-Continent, Allama Iqbal, Allahabad Address, Muslims State, Political Struggle.



A Brief History of the Muslim Struggle

History reveals that Muhammad Bin Qasim was the first Muslim conqueror of India in the eighth century who entered India through the sands of Sind and paved the way for the subsequent Muslim incursions. However, Qutb-u-Din Aibek (r. 1206-1210) was the Muslim ruler who established the first Muslim empire in the thirteenth century, marking the birth of the Delhi Sultanate (r.1206-1526). His successors ruled India for a hundred years under the tag of a 'slave dynasty'. Later, Khiljis (r. 1290-1320) and Tugluqs (r. 1320-1414) exercised imperial authority for over a hundred years. The decline of the Sultanate is associated with the mismanagement of the Sayyids (r. 1414-1451) and Lodhis (r. 1451-1526) as in the first quarter of the sixteenth century it lost its prestige. The political chaos provided Zaheer-u-Din Babar (r. 1526-1530), who had come from Fargana (a place in Central Asia), with an opportunity to erect the pillars of the Mughal Empire (1526-1857) which lasted for more than two and a half centuries. The first phase of the Mughal period saw religious conciliation between the Muslims and the Hindus. Aurangzeb Alamgir's reign negated the influence of Hinduism on Muslim society, religion, and culture. The later Mughals could not control the Empire, which resulted in their confrontation with the foreign manipulators, i.e., the British. The weakness of the Mughal rulers allowed the British to interfere and then exploit the affairs of the Empire. The confrontation resulted in the War of Independence of 1857 in which the last Mughal ruler Bahadur Shah Zafar had to face a defeat at the hands of the revolutionized British (Aziz, 2002) as the Indian forces, led by Bahadur Shah Zafar, could not face the latest weapons.

After the war, the British diverted their attention towards victimizing the Muslims while accusing the Muslims of inciting the locals against stranger forces. The British curbed all the past loyalties of the Muslims which would later restrain the educational, social, economic, political, and religious development of the Muslims. Meanwhile, Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan emerged as a Muslim leader who wrote many works to prove that Muslims had always been loyal to the British. Sayyid adopted three-pronged strategies to restore cordial relations with the British government and to make the Muslims well aware of their political rights. He encouraged the Muslims to be loyal towards the British, remaining aloof from politics, and equipping themselves with modern education. After getting retired from service in 1876 Sayyid Ahmad sat as a member of the Governor General's Legislative Council from 1878 to 1883 (Aziz, 2002) During that tenure, Sir Sayyid wrote a couple of books to justify the loyalties of the Muslims towards the

British. He wrote *The Causes of Indian Revolt* in which he gave the political and administrative reasons behind the war. He also wrote *Loyal Muhammadans of India* and elaborated on the efforts of the Muslims to save the British families in the war centers like Bijnore etc. But it was a hard nut to crack because the Hindus had equally blamed the Muslims for initiating the war against the rulers and they had consistently been airing conspiracies against them. In return, Sir Sayyid advised the Muslims to respond to the Hindus with intellect.

Anyhow, Sayyid's strategy and efforts bore fruit in the shape of producing a well-educated class that was supposed to hold the reins of Muslim polity in the Sub-Continent in the days to come. Meanwhile, the leadership of the Indian National Congress (INC) did not miss any opportunity to enslave the Muslims politically. There are so many examples in which the Hindus reflected their narrow-mindedness. For example, they were found protesting against the Partition of Bengal in 1905 which occurred on administrative grounds. Though the partition had ended the Hindu hegemony on the Muslims in East Bengal they observed black day on 16 October and initiated the Swadeshi Movement¹, and resultantly it was annulled in December 1911.

Briefly speaking, the Hindu mindset negated the protection of Muslim political rights in the Sub-Continent in 1928 when Lord Birkenhead, the then Secretary of State for India, assigned a task to the Indian leaders for formulating the constitutional proposal for the respective land. Almost all the political parties in India took it as a challenge and started working collectively to respond to it. Once again, the Hindus tried to exploit the situation. A committee was formed that was named as Nehru Committee to prepare the proposal. Motilal Nehru, the Chairman of the committee and prime author of the report which was later known as the Nehru Report, sabotaged the Muslim demands.² Such a level of politics of agitation from the corner of the Hindus infuriated the Muslims. In a way, it proved a blessing in disguise for the Muslims as it caused the conversion of Muhammad Ali Jinnah from an Indian nationalist to a Muslim nationalist as he had declared it as 'the parting of the ways' and presented his historical Fourteen Points in

¹ The movement was initiated by the Hindus of Bengal after the partition of Bengal in 1905. All the British goods were boycotted instead the local products were encouraged to be used. Many Hindu landlords and industrialists financed the production of local goods with a motive of negating the market of foreign ones. In fact, Indian National Congress (INC) used this movement as an arsenal for its freedom movement against the British.

² There were multiple demands of the Muslims during the freedom movement but the prominent ones are as. (1) Separate electorates (2) Provincial autonomy (one-third representation in the Central Legislative Assembly).

March 1929 which were seemed to ask Motilal Nehru to revise their approach towards the Muslim demands. In addition to that, the Jinnah Muslim League and the Shafi League, which were divided on the issue of the Delhi-Muslim Proposals of 1927³, were now united to begin a new chapter of Muslim political struggle.

At the same time, Allama Muhammad Iqbal, a renowned and refined Muslim poet, philosopher, and political thinker, was examining the pathetic condition of the Muslims. After a deep observation of the Hindu mindset, Iqbal, once an advocate of Hindu-Muslim unity, took a stance that it was impossible to promote and maintain unity among the Muslims and the Hindus for which Jinnah had been striving for more than twenty years. Therefore, Iqbal advocated the partition of India and demanded and defined the frontiers of a proposed 'consolidated Muslim state'. Further, Iqbal thought that the division of India into various states could be in the best interests of India and Islam (Bolitho, 1954).

Further, Iqbal can be asserted as an intellectual successor of Jamaluddin Afghani like Altaf Hussain Hali and Molana Muhammad Ali Johar, two prominent figures who had advocated an independent state for the Muslims. Hali, through his '*Musaddas*' (a genre of Urdu Poetry containing six lines sustain) and Johar through the Khilafat Movement inculcated political consciousness among the Muslims in the North-Western provinces of India. Similarly, Iqbal propagated the ideal of Afghani through his poetry and enabled the Muslims to get rid of the clutches of the British as well as the Hindus (Abdullah, 1981).

Allama Iqbal: A Poet cum Political Thinker

In Muslim history, many scholars have earned the name for interpreting Islam according to the suit of modern requirements. The names of Shah Waliullah, Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, Syed Jamal-u-Din Afghani, and Molana Shibli Noumani are worth mentioning in this connection. But when one talks about the subjects of Muslim nationalism, governing principles of the Islamic state, and the commencement of *Ijtehad*⁴ in the elected Muslim assembly for modernizing the Shariah Laws, the contribution of Allama

³ In these proposals Muhammad Ali Jinnah tried to convince his colleagues to concede one of the most highlighted demand of the Muslims i.e. Separate Electorates for the security of the rest. But he could not get his decision endorsed by Sir Muhammad Shafi who then decided to part away from Jinnah group.

⁴ Its literal meanings are "to strive", "to endeavour" or "to work hard". In Islamic legal terminology, it is a process of deriving laws of Sharia from its sources. It can be an independent by an expert in Sharia or can be a thorough exertion of a group of jurists especially with reference to find solutions to the legal questions.

Muhammad Iqbal comes to mind. Especially concerning Muslim nationalism Iqbal viewed that, instead of a common language, race, and territory, the common spiritual aspiration accumulates among the Muslims who constitute a nation (Iqbal, 2011). It is necessary to mention here that Iqbal went through an evolutionary process. The young Iqbal was a passionate advocate of Hindu-Muslim unity as he had given equal status to a Brahman and a *Mullah* (a religious guide) in his poem *Naya Shiwala* (the new temple). His *Tirana-i-Hindi* (the Anthem of India) was the reflection of being an Indian nationalist. The anthem became more popular than the national song of India i.e. *Bande Mataram*. Iqbal's anthem runs as:

“Sare jahan se acha Hindustan hamara

Hum bulbulein hain iski yeh gulistan hamara

[Our Hindustan is the best country in the world.

We are its nightingales: it is our garden.]

Mazhab nahin sikhata apas mein ber rakhna

Hindi hein hum vatan hai Hindustan hamara

[Religion does not teach us to bear malice toward one another.

We are Hindi and our country is Hindustan.]

Kuch bat hai kih hasti mit-ti nahain hamari

Sadyon raha hai dushman daur-i-zaman hamara

[There must be some inherent strength in us because our

individuality has endured through times that have been adverse

for many centuries.]” (Burke and Qureshi, 1995).

During the period of the Khilafat Movement (1919-1922), some *Ulema* (Religious scholars) of Deoband organized a party known as *Jami'at-i-Ulema-e-Hind*. Molana Hussain Ahmad Madni was chosen as its leader at that time. Due to having different views about the concept of nationhood with the leadership of the Muslim League, the *Ulema* of *Jami'at* were inclined towards bridging ties with the Indian National Congress (INC) equally mediated by Molana Abu al-Kalam Azad. Both, the INC and *Jami'at* were working for the united India while blaming the Muslim League as a 'reactionary and communal party' (Ahmad, 1967). The problem of defining nationhood was the principal cause behind the conflict between the League and the *Jami'at*. As a reference, in the views of Molana Hussain Ahmad Madni, it was the country, instead of religion, that constituted a nation. On the contrary, Iqbal, a member of the Muslim League and equipped with a Western educational background, was a vehement critic of this

traditional doctrine of nationhood. He expounded that religion was the most important component of nationhood which would, later, be called "Islamic nationalism" (Ahmad, 1967).

In the historiography of Pakistan, Muhammad Iqbal is known as a spiritual and founding father of the nation. Most of the Indian writers project him 'as a firm and convinced Muslim nationalist' while other works describe him as a champion of Hindu-Muslim solidarity and a symbol of India's composite culture 'fostered and sustained throughout the centuries'. That is why Khawaja Ahmad Faruqi, S. M. H. Burney, and Rafique Zakriya hesitate to associate Iqbal with the parentage of Pakistan (Datta, 2002). Some of the authors have analyzed his poetry and have negated the fact that Iqbal was a politico-cultural ideologue of the Pakistan Movement. Ali Sardar Jafri, Muhammad Mujeeb, Khushwant Singh, and Jagan Nath Azad believe that Iqbal's principal interest lay in poetry rather than in the Muslim struggle for separatism (Datta, 2002). Additionally, it is the nature of the source material that has forced the prominent writers to enunciate Iqbal's political evolution that led him to emerge as a poet-philosopher. His Presidential address at Allahabad in 1930, his participation in Round Table Conferences of 1931 and 1932, and his correspondence with Jinnah through letters between May 23, 1936, and November 10, 1937, are the sources to judge his political wisdom, especially for resolving the Hindu-Muslim question (Datta, 2002).

Iqbal belongs to the class of Rousseau, Plato, Karl Marx, and Mazzini who are considered to be the forerunners of the republics in France, Greece, Germany, and Italy respectively. In the same way, Iqbal ranks as the spiritual founder of Pakistan. He is associated with the Muslim revolution, especially concerning thought and culture. With the message "Dare and Love" (Ahmad, 1981), Iqbal inculcated a vision among the Muslims and revitalized the specific civilization in which the Muslims raised to a higher pedestal of culture. As mentioned by Jinnah, Iqbal's philosophy is based on the principles of courage, faith, self-confidence, and optimism. That is why, he never believed in failure rather he believed in the superiority of man over the rest of the creatures. He used to profess that self-realization was the most important asset to touch the heights of glory and then get nearer to God. He behaved like a philosopher as well as a political thinker at the same time. With such amalgamation, he was the first to conceive of the feasibility of the division of Indian Territory on communal lines and conditioned it with the solution of its political issues (Ahmad, 1981).

Allahabad Address (1930)

Philosophically speaking, as far as the relationship between the state and religion is concerned, a necessary element for moral uplift, Iqbal had an innovative idea in this respect. In modern Europe, democracy and the parliamentary form of government were the offspring of the Industrial Revolution (1750-1850) in which social contracts replaced the divine rights of the kings. It was perhaps the first step towards the foundation of 'the government of the people and for the people'. Meanwhile, the separatist tendency of the Church and state had firm roots in the particular civilization. Comparatively, Islam professes that the state and religion are supplementary to each other. Iqbal thought that the state, being an institution for the public welfare, should present a reflection of strong connections between itself and morality (Ahmad, 1985). Iqbal observed the same approach towards presenting his poetry and political writings in which he seems to advise Muslims to follow the moral ways for the pattern of governance.

The origin of the idea of Pakistan and the formation of the word "Pakistan" have invited many researchers and authors to explore. Some of these writers trace it back to the beginning of the War of Independence of 1857 and others enunciate some different events and occasions. For example, in an interview, Jinnah presented the views of John Bright (a British statesman) of 1877 regarding the division of India into various provinces. According to Jinnah, Bright viewed that shortly before the withdrawal of the British Government India might be divided into five or six states at the time of the transfer of powers (Sayeed, 1980). In the opinion of the communist writers, Stalin seemed to foresee the break-up of India into various nationalities in 1912 (Sayeed, 1980). The idea of a separate state was mooted among the Indian Muslims as early as December 1883 when Wilfred Scawen Blunt suggested that the Southern provinces of India should be governed by the Hindus and the Northern ones should be placed under the Muslims. But, in this scheme, the British were supposed to run the major departments while giving the legislation, finance, and civil administration into the native hands (Sayeed, 1980).

The inauguration of the Government of India Act 1919 marked another step of the Muslims towards separatism. The act reflected that the British government would transfer powers to the local leaders which created an uneasiness for the Muslims because they would have a smaller share of power. That unjust distribution of power would later make the Muslims conscious of their separate identity from the rest of India. It was an influence of the composition of the act that Molana Muhammad Ali Johar, in 1924,

demanded reforms in North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) in the annual session of the Muslim League in Bombay. Then came the episode of Nehru Report (1928) in which the Muslims, being a minority, were politically harassed by the Hindus due to which they had made a novel suggestion for at least dominating some parts of India (Sayeed, 1980).

Perhaps the earlier attempts and ideas were hazy and uncertain towards a separate state yet Sir Muhammad Iqbal gave a clear concept of such a state. In 1930, at the Allahabad session of the Muslim League, in his Presidential address, Iqbal presented a clear and comprehensive notion of a separate state based on ideological and geographical factors.

“I would like to see the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sindh, 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” (Sayeed, 1980).

These words reflect that Iqbal was demanding the grouping of Muslim-majority provinces of North-West India into a single unit within a Central Federal State. The same kind of reflection can be seen in the letter he had written to Edward Thompson on March 4, 1934. In the letter, Iqbal seems to protest against Thompson's blame for calling him ‘protagonist of the scheme called “Pakistan”’. He emphasized that he had suggested the creation of a Muslim province with an overwhelmingly Muslim population which would be a part of the proposed Indian ‘federation’ (Burke and Qureshi, 1997). In another part of the address, Iqbal tried to convince the governing authorities that the Muslims, by any definition of the modern world, were a nation. He said:

“We are 70 million, and far more homogeneous 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. The Hindus, though ahead of us in almost all aspects, have not yet been able to achieve the kind of homogeneity which is necessary for a nation, and which Islam has given you as a gift” (Burke and Qureshi, 1997).

Impact of the Address

It was the first time in the political history of the Sub-Continent that Iqbal had clearly outlined the need for Muslim sovereignty through his address at Allahabad. His idea attracted prominent Muslim political figures who, later, strived either to follow it or to practice it. Iqbal not only presented his proposals for a separate Muslim state but also

convinced Jinnah and his followers to stick to this noble cause. When Jinnah came back to India he got an opportunity to exchange letters with Allama Iqbal. In his letters, Iqbal tried his best to convince Jinnah that the development and enforcement of Islamic Shariat lay only within a free Muslim state and it was a pre-requisite for a peaceful India as well. Iqbal argued that the redistribution of India on the lines of racial, religious, and, linguistic affinities could save it from the civil war. Jinnah seemed convinced by Iqbal but he waited and waited for accumulating the support of other leaders of the Muslim League (Dar, 2015). Iqbal's efforts bore fruit during 1938 and 1940 when Jinnah and the leadership of the Muslim League raised the voices for separate Muslim state (s) time and again. Nawab Abdul Latif, Abdul Sattar Kheri, Muhammad Sharif Toosy, Abdul Wadood, Asadullah, Chohadry Khaliquzzaman, Sikander Hayat Khan, Nawab of Mamdoot, Muhammad Afzal Qadri and Mian Kifayat Ali were the prominent political figures from Muslim League who presented the plans for advocating partition and establishing the Muslim zones into a state or states (Dar, 2015).

Iqbal's proposal for the consolidation of the Muslim state within the loose Indian federation became a guide for the later Muslim political leadership. Soon after the Allahabad Address, many other Muslim politicians suggested the partition of India but in the end the idea of Iqbal was endorsed by the Quaid-i-Azam. Prominently, Chohadry Rehmat Ali presented his plan in 1933 of partitioning India into two independent states. The plan was considered impractical under those political circumstances. In 1939, Dr. Abdul Latif suggested envisaging 'two culturally homogeneous states in 5 zones within India' (Datta, 2001). Sir Sikander Hayat's Scheme reflected the loose federation in which the provinces would be given autonomy with the regional legislatures of seven zones. Nawab of Mamdot was in favour of a confederation of two separate states. In 1938, Sir Abdullah Haroon presented his proposal in the meeting of the Sind Muslim League for dividing the country into two parts (Qureshi, 193).

Similarly, Muhammad Afzal Hussain Qadri had a plan in 1939 for the division of India into two blocks i.e. Hindustan and Pakistan. According to Qadri, the Pakistani block was comprised of the North-West unit, Bengal, and the Provinces of Delhi and Malabar. After the deep observation of all these suggestions, plans, and proposals by the prominent political figure one can say that the Pakistan Resolution was closer to Iqbal's original proposal than any other one. In his Presidential address of the resolution, Jinnah seems to echo Iqbal's ideological justification. He seems to reflect that Iqbal's idea of maintaining a separate cultural identity based on religion and race provided a pace to

the Muslim political struggle for creating a sovereign independent state for the Muslims (Datta, 2001).

That is why, Rafique Ahmad praises Iqbal as the single person who influenced Jinnah's thoughts and perceptions the most among his contemporary political activists and thinkers. In 1930, Iqbal's Presidential Address at Allahabad was the prime factor that would later pave the way for the Muslim leadership to protect the political identity of the Muslims with a principal motive of having a separate state (Ahmad, 2001). Ahmad is of the view that the Allahabad Address and the letters that Iqbal had written to Jinnah between 1936 and 1937 did not allow Jinnah to let down the economic and political destiny of the Muslims. Furthermore, Jinnah believed that Iqbal was his friend, leader, and philosopher, and supposed Iqbal was a Principal force behind the Muslim Renaissance in India (Ahmad, 2001). Additionally, a few authors have commented on Jinnah's conversion towards seeking an independent state for the Muslims. One argues that the rule of Congress ministries in 1937-38 made Jinnah feel to work only for the cause of the Muslims while the other views that his isolation from the Indian National Congress (INC) forced him to realize the need for separation. But no one has paid attention to the importance of Iqbal's Allahabad Address for Jinnah. It was the particular Address by which Jinnah's conversion to the idea of separation was highly influenced. So, a reflection on Jinnah's speeches and habits in later life suggests that 'Iqbal's influence led Jinnah to a deeper personal appreciation of Muslim identity' (Whaites, 2007). Iqbal's learned address contained some striking ideas. Undoubtedly, his poetry worked as a source of inspiration and inculcation of the sense of nationalism among Muslims. The basic message of his poetry was to advise the Muslims for having inspiration from their forefathers and he viewed that their glorious past could revive their fortune. Iqbal's presence and participation in political matters worked like a tower of strength for Jinnah at the time when the Muslim League was shadowed by the Unionists in Punjab. Iqbal motivated the young intelligentsia of Punjab who spread his message in the far and wide areas of the province. As a result, the League got the stronghold in Punjab and the Unionist government was brought down (Burke and Qureshi, 1997). In addition to that, Iqbal also possessed a political sense to recognize that Jinnah was the only person who could settle the issues of the Muslims in particular and India in general (Burke and Qureshi, 1997).

Conclusion

In short, Allama Muhammad Iqbal was a learned poet cum politician who represented the Muslims at different political forums to raise their voice in the Indian Sub-Continent. His poetry worked to wake up the Muslims from the deep sleep of ignorance and made them well aware of the fact that religious waywardness had earned them nothing but a decline in socio-economic and religio-political spheres. In political terms, Iqbal possessed an unmatched vision through which he laid the foundation stone of the separate Muslim identity in India in his famous address at Allahabad in 1930 from the platform of the Muslim League. The proposals in this address were equally followed and endorsed by the later Muslim leaders. Within no time, Chohadry Rehmat Ali suggested the name 'Pakistan' in 1933 most probably for the provinces proposed by Iqbal, and in March 1940, Muhammad Ali Jinnah inscribed the idea of Iqbal through the Pakistan Resolution. Resultantly, the resolution paved the way for the Muslims to erect an independent Muslim state in the Indian Sub-Continent no later than August 1947.

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