Pakistan Failed Jinnah

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On September 11 this year falls Mohammed Ali Jinnah's sixtythird death anniversary. The following article is being published on that occasion.
There are a few figures in the history of the world who can be put in both a positive and a negative frame. Mohammad Ali Jinnah is one of them. He is both revered and hated, and admired and cursed, by the vast masses of the subcontinent.

For forty years of his political career, he fought for the freedom of India. In those days he was proud to be the son of the soil and used to call himself an Indian first and a Muslim afterwards. Sectarian interests or sectional feelings had no place in his thinking or activities. On his return to India in 1896, after completing his education from London, he had joined a secular organisation, 'The Bombay Presidency Association' and later the Indian National Congress and soon emerged as its prominent leader. Gokhale, Dadabhai Nauroji and Pherozshah Mehta were his political gurus and liberal principles like equality, freedom and secularism his ideology. He had condemned and criticised the formation of the communal organisations and considered their existence as disastrous for the unity of the country. He stood for merit for every domain and opposed reservations and separate

electorates for Muslims. He was willing for joint electorates even in the mid-thirties but demanded safeguards for the Muslim community to make them feel secure and give up separate electorates which were certainly advantageous for them. In 1913 he joined the Muslim League on the advice of his political guru, Gokhale, in order to rescue it from the hold of the loyalists and obscurantists in which he succeeded by 1916. The Muslim League under his leadership came closer to the Congress under the Lucknow Pact and decided to fight for swaraj shoulder to shoulder with the latter. His and his like-minded Muslim colleagues' opposition to all communal concessions posed a challenge to the British policy of divide-and-rule. They tried to buy him up by conferring on him the title of Sir and later offered him even the Governorship of any province, but he refused.

He was well aware of the root cause of communalism in the country and once gave an amazing solution for its eradication. He told Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, his close friend: 'You destroy your Pandit and we will destroy our Mullah and there will be communal peace.' Religion never mattered in his public or private life. He left the Congress because he disagreed with Gandhi's mixture of politics with religion. Gandhi used the Khilafat, a religious issue, to unite the Hindus and Muslims in India. Jinnah opposed it both in the Muslim League and Congress even at the risk of his political career. Kamal Pasha, who had

abolished the Khilafat [rule of the khalifa], and introduced democracy and modernism in Turkey, became his role model.

Jinnah had no knowledge of his religion, Islam, and was, to an extent, irreligious. He did not offer Namaz, never observed fasts, was never seen in the mosque and never donned achkan and churidar pyjama before he assumed the role of a Muslim leader. So much so that he never joined his Muslim colleagues for Namaz during the sessions of the Muslim League when its meetings were adjourned for prayers. He always wore Western suits with a sola hat, smoked cigars, drank scotch, and ate ham-sandwiches even during the days of Ramadan. He had married a non-Muslim girl and allowed his modern wife to be present in the Muslim League meetings without purdah in ultra-modern dresses and to ride on horseback to Churchgate.

Jinnah never concealed his Hindu ancestry. His grandfather was a Bhatia Hindu who had converted to Islam. The Khoja sect, to which he belonged, believed in ten Avatars and had much in common with Hindus in their inheritance laws and social customs. Jinnah used to say publicly that he had sprung from the Hindu stock. Even his name, Jinnah, was a Hindu name. Because of his ignorance of Islam, many called him Pandit Jinnah. Yet he used to win his election from the Muslim constituency with a huge number of votes. The reason for this was that in those days communalism had not acquired roots and

the people voted for Jinnah because he was known for his love for the country, honesty and integrity. So popular was he that Sarojini Naidu wrote a poem on him eulogising his patriotism and the people of Bombay raised an amount of Rs 65,000 to build a Jinnah Memorial Hall within the Congress compound.

After leaving the Congress he had not turned into a communalist. He organised a secular party known as the Independent Party in the Central Legislative Assembly. It consisted of members belonging to the Hindu, Sikh, Parsee and Muslim communities. His party always co-operated with the Congress vis-à-vis the British authorities and their allies. Jinnah contested the elections as a member of the Independent Party till 1936, declined to lead the Muslims in the Assembly, and refused to work exclusively for the Muslim community. His nationalist ideas and secular outlook won him a special place in the hearts of the liberal-minded countrymen, especially the youth. In 1936 he was chosen to preside over the All India Youth Conference in which the All India Students Federation was formed.

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IT was only after the elections to the Provincial Assemblies in 1937 and the subsequent Congress refusal to share power with the Muslim League that Jinnah started changing his track from secular politics to sectional and separatist politics which ultimately paved

the way for the formation of Pakistan.

However, the Pakistan of his vision was to be a secular, modern and minority-friendly state. The Pakistan of his concept was not only for the Muslims but also for the minorities like Hindus, Parsees and Sikhs. He had approached the Sikh leaders and tried to assure them their rightful place in the new state but failed to convince them. In all his public speeches, statements and even in his press conferences, he reiterated that Pakistan would not be a theocratic state. In 1944 the Mullahs opposed the Dawn [the Muslim League's daily paper] policy of not propagating religion. They approached Pothan Joseph, the Christian editor of Dawn, and complained that Dawn was a Muslim paper but its editorials, specials articles, news stories and Sunday features were devoid of Islamic content and Quranic injunctions. Jinnah refused to be dictated by the Mullahs. They were told that Dawn was not only for Muslims but for non-Muslims too. No wonder they cursed Jinnah as Kafir-i-Azam. In the elections in 1945 Jinnah refused to take the help of Ahrars and Jamat-i-Islami as the two organisations had desired the new state to be governed by Islamic principles. They denounced Jinnah and characterised his concept of Pakistan as napak [impure], filthy and damned.

When Jinnah got Pakistan, he tried to give practical shape to his vision. Like Kamal Pasha, the architect of modern Turkey, Jinnah too wanted the state of Pakistan to be truly democratic, and free from any interference

from the obscurantist forces. In this attempt, he sought the help of the secular minded Muslims, Hindus and Parsees. He told his Hindu industrialist friend, Dalmia, and M.S.M. Sharma, the editor of Daily Gazette of Karachi, and others who had decided to stay in Pakistan that Pakistan 'will function with the will and sanction of the entire body of the people of Pakistan'. According to Sri Prakasa, the first Indian High Commissioner to Pakistan, Jinnah was anxious to revert to his old role of ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity, a Muslim Gokhale. He wanted Pakistan to be a model state wherein the majority would not suppress the minority. 'I am going to show how the minorities should be treated,' he declared.

On August 15, 1947, he gave a reception to celebrate the Indian Independence Day. Among the guests were Kiran Shankar Roy, the leader of the Congress which had rechristened itself as the Pakistan National Congress, Bhim Sen Sachar, C. Vazirani, Justice Mahajan, M.S.M. Sharma and others. On that day, on his order, the Indian and Pakistan flags flew together. The Pakistan Minorities Association was formed under the suggestion of Jinnah with Hemandas Wadhwani as the President and M.S.M. Sharma as one of the Vice-Presidents. Jinnah had the Muslim League flag adopted as the flag of Pakistan, but with a white strip covering one-third of the flag as a symbol of peace and minorities. The task of writing a national song for Pakistan was assigned to a Hindu poet from Lahore, named Jagannath Azad.

He wanted the best brains to make the Constitution for Pakistan. Kiran Shankar Roy's name was in the panel of Chairmen who could preside over the Constituent Assembly in the absence of the President. The panel was prepared by Jinnah. Jogendranath Mandal was elected as the temporary Chairman of the Constituent Assembly and was also made the Law Minister in the first Cabinet of Pakistan. In India, Jinnah had never missed an opportunity to castigate Maulana Abul Kalam Azad by calling him a 'showboy'. Ironically, he even approved the name of Abul Kalam Azad, who had been nominated to the Constituent Assembly along with Abdul Ghaffar Khan from the North West Frontier Province. [Azad declined when his name appeared in the newspaper.]

In order to keep away from religious inter-vention in the Muslim civil society, he had successfully opposed the Shariat Bill and the Qazi Bill in the Indian Central Legislative Assembly despite opposition from the Mullahs. In Pakistan he openly declared that religion was a private matter and Islamic principles could not be applied in the political domain. A few days after the formation of Pakistan, a group of leading Ulemas waited on him and asked him to apply the Sharia to the functioning of the new state. Jinnah told them strongly: 'Whose Sharia? Hambalis? Sha'afis? Ma,alikeis? Ja'afris?... I certainly do not propose to hand over the field to Ulemas.' A majority of the Muslim leaders too were for Pakistan to be an Islamic state. But Jinnah made

it clear to them that neither he nor his Working Committee, nor the Council of the All India Muslim League had ever passed such a resolution wherein it was committed to make Pakistan a theocratic state.

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WHILE inaugurating the first session of the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan, as its President on August 11, 1947, he firmly declared:

You are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or any other place of worship in the state of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed—that has nothing to do with the fundamental principle that we are all citizens of one state... Now I think we should keep that in front of us as our ideal and that you will find that in course of time Hindus will cease to be Hindus and Muslims will cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense, because that is the personal faith of each individual, but in the political sense as citizens of the state.

All the eleven members of the Pakistan National Congress led by Kiran Shankar Roy were present in the Constituent Assembly when Jinnah laid down the basic principles, that is, of secularism and democracy on which the Constitution of Pakistan would be made. Many were amazed. If Pakistan was to be a secular state like that of India then what was the logic of the creation of Pakistan?

This was the first and last address of Jinnah to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan as it did not meet again in Jinnah's lifetime.

Jinnah's vision of Pakistan was not tolerated by the fundamentalists. They had tolerated Jinnah so long he was leading the Muslims in the fight for Pakistan but when Pakistan was achieved Jinnah was seen as a hindrance to their objective of making Pakistan a theocratic state. The fundamentalists became active after Pakistan came into being, lest Jinnah succeed in his objective. They disliked his speeches, statements and assurances to the minorities but were up in arms after his speech in the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan. The fundamentalists in the high-ups in the administration refused to publish those portions of his speech in which he spoke about Pakistan to be a secular and democratic state. It was only when Altaf Hussain, who had taken over the editorship of Dawn from Pothan Joseph, threatened that he would go to Jinnah to report the matter if the press advice was not withdrawn that they agreed to publish his speech. Even after that some of the news-papers published his address in brief without those paragraphs. Later attempts were made to have this speech burnt or removed from the official record.

His speech also earned him the wrath of the illiterate Muslim masses that had been given an Islamic picture of the new state by the Muslim leaders before partition. Three days after the inauguration of Pakistan, Jinnah was

in Lahore. There he went to the Shahi Mosque to address the gathering at Id prayers, but people refused to listen to him. He was shouted down and obliged to leave the mosque by the back door.

However, Jinnah was determined to defeat the designs of the fundamentalists. He invited the secular and progressive Muslims, whom in India he considered his enemies, to strengthen his position vis-a-vis the orthodox sections. Without a strong, secular and democratic party, this was an impossible task. Hence he decided to convert the Muslim League into a non-communal party. To ensure impartiality in the governance of the state and to rise above party politics, he resigned from the presidentship of the Muslim League. H.S Suhrawardy, the well-known barrister and ex-Premier of undivided Bengal, who had become a preacher of Hindu-Muslim unity under the influence of Gandhi, had come to Karachi to attend the All India Muslim League Council's session to be held on December 15, 1947, along with other Indian delegates. Jinnah sought his help and Suhrawardy in the meeting of the Council, which was presided over by Jinnah, strongly pleaded for making the League a democratic and secular organisation by opening its door to all the citizens of Pakistan irrespective of their religion, caste or creed. Despite Jinnah's support, the proposal was strongly opposed by a majority of the Leaguers of Pakistan. Finally only ten members, including Suhrawardy and Mian Iftikharuddin, a former Congress

leader of undivided Punjab, voted for the resolution. [The meeting was held in camera.] Suhrawardy was condemned and called the enemy of Pakistan and later his name was dropped from the Pakistan Constituent Assembly. When he went back to East Bengal to promote communal harmony, he was arrested by the Chief Minister Nazimmudin and jailed.

Jinnah assigned the task of re-organising the Pakistan Muslim League to Khaliquzamman, a former Congress leader from the United Provinces, who had migrated to Pakistan. The orthodoxy did not let him have a free hand in the party's affairs. They called him a 'refugee'.

Jinnah had also met Abdul Ghaffar Khan, the North-West Frontier Province leader, a former member of the Indian National Congress and close associate of Gandhi, and had asked him to strengthen his position by joining the Muslim League. But Ghaffar Khan was not willing to do so as the League was not a secular body. Jinnah explained to him that he wanted to convert the Muslim League into National League, open to every loyal citizen of Pakistan but was being attacked by the mad Mullahs and it was precisely because of that that he wanted his colleagues of Khuda-i-Khidmatgar to join the League and help him in ousting those dangerous elements. Abdul Ghaffar Khan remained unconvinced. On March 8, 1948, Ghaffar Khan along with G.M. Sayed, another progressive leader, and Munshi Ahmed Din, a popular leader of the Congress Socialist Party of undivided India, issued a manifesto

announcing the formation of the Pakistan People's Party which had as its objective, the establishment of a 'Union of free Socialist Republics' in Pakistan. It was not banned during Jinnah's life-time. The Communist Party of Pakistan too was formed with Sajjad Zaheer, a well-known leader of the CPI, as its General Secretary. Under Sajjad's leadership, the newly formed party actively worked in the direction of making the state of Pakistan democratic and socialist, despite opposition from the orthodox leaders.

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IN April 1948, a Convention, called the Pakistan People's Convention, was held in Karachi. It was attended by all the veteran leaders of the freedom struggle, Socialists, Communists, various representatives of the trade unions, peasant and students organisations to make a democratic front for the construction of a non-communal democratic state and to build a just society based on harmony. Abdul Ghaffar Khan also came from Peshawar along with his followers to attend the Convention. The fundamentalists were against holding this Convention. They called its participants traitors and demanded action against them. Jinnah not only allowed the Convention, ignoring opposition, but also ordered two-lakhs of charkhas [spinning wheels], earlier a symbol of mockery for him, for Abdul Ghaffar Khan's social work. However, the Chief Minister of the NWFP did not want any political rival. When Ghaffar Khan went back to Peshawar,

Qaiyum, flouting Jinnah's advice, got Ghaffar Khan arrested, and called him an agent of India.

Despite stiff opposition and ill-health, Jinnah continued his efforts at building Pakistan on liberal principles. In February 1948 in his broadcast for the people of America, he said: 'In any case Pakistan is not going to be a theocratic state—to be ruled by priests with a divine mission. We have non-Muslims—Hindus, Christians and Parsees—but they are all Pakistanis. They will enjoy the same rights and principles as any other citizens and will play their rightful part in the affairs of Pakistan.'

He regarded freedom of the press as a pillar of democracy and was against any restraint on it even if it wrote against the government's policies or actions. During the Karachi riots in January 1948, the editor of the Sind Observer, K. Punniah, wrote some editorials accusing the authorities of taking sides with the majority [Muslim] community. There was a sharp reaction among the people and government over the comments. Ultimately, the matter was brought to the notice of Jinnah. His reply was: 'No action against the paper be taken. Let other papers give a befitting reply to the editor.'

He was well aware of the trouble the Mullahs could cause and hence he went to Quetta on June 14, 1948 to address the defence forces and reminded them that he, as the Governor-General of Pakistan, was the final

authority to give orders to the armed forces and they should not listen to the Mullahs who had no idea about how to run the state.

Ironically all his moves were checkmated not only by the obscurantists but also by the Muslim League leaders. He was no more the undisputed leader of the Muslims and the Muslim League. Both Daultana and Mamdot, the powerful provincial leaders of Punjab, refused to listen him and Jinnah had to wash off his hands from Punjab affairs. In Sind, Khuhro, the Chief Minister, refused to give Karachi for making it the capital of Pakistan. Khuhro and the Muslim League members of Sind openly challenged the sick leader. In Dacca the people staged demonstrations against him when Urdu was declared to be the official language of the province. He was reminded that he was an outsider, a Bombayite and a refugee. Even Liaquat Ali Khan [the first Prime Minister of Pakistan who was later murdered], had started ignoring him. When he stayed at Zirat for a long period for health reasons, Liaquat paid him a courtesy call only on one occasion and that too for a few minutes. Subsequently when he was brought back to Karachi, neither Liaquat Ali nor any of his colleagues went to see him at his residence.

Though Jinnah was all powerful, the head of the state as well as Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, yet his shoot-at-sight order had not restrained the rioters in Lahore who were killing and looting the non-Muslims. He was unable to provide safety and security even to his

Hindu friends who on his advice had decided to stay in Pakistan. They all, including the Hindu leaders of the Congress, left for India. Demons-trations against him were staged and effigies burnt by both the Hindu and Muslim refugees. He was cursed and called Qatil-i-Azam, a Kafir, and a Bombayite. Rahmat Ali called him Boozna [monkey]. Many attempts were made on his life. He was alone, sad, and unhappy in the land of his own creation. In January 1948 he visited the Hindu refugees' camps in Lahore and wept, perhaps realising the folly of partition. According to J.N. Sahni, a journalist, who knew him closely:

Whatever his detractors might say, neither he nor Liaquat ever dreamt that Muslims in Pakistan left to themselves would behave like brutes, dacoits, goondas and cannibals against Hindus and Sikhs and later even against their own co-religionists!

The Muslim refugees who had migrated to Pakistan leaving India were terribly depressed, disappointed and desperate to return to their homes in India. One of them suggested a way out:

The whole partition business was a blunder and the accursed British did the trick. The only way to set it right is to repeat 1947. If we win in the war with India, we go back home as conquerors; if we lose, there shall be reunion and we return home all the same and if we die on the battlefield, we taste the cup of martyrdom and enter

the portals of paradise. But another round we must have.

Jinnah, the Governor-General and creator of Pakistan, too wanted to come back to India. During his address to the All India Muslim League Council meeting in December 1947 in Karachi, he stated: 'I still consider myself to be an Indian. For the moment I have accepted the Governor-Generalship of Pakistan. But I am looking forward to a time when I would return to India and take my place as a citizen of my country.' Before leaving India for Pakistan, he had not sold his house at Malabar Hills which he built during World War II, and had not claimed compensation from the Indian Government as he wished to return later. The sick Jinnah longed to be in Bombay at his Malabar Hills house and had also spoken about it to Sri Prakasa, and told him to convey his desire to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. He loved the cosmopolitan life of Bombay where he had his Hindu friends, the grave of his wife, and his only daughter, Dina. The un-secular environment suffocated his secular spirit. During the last few days of his life he went to Zirat to recuperate his health. When he was to travel back to Karachi, he could not even walk. His sister, Fatima, wanted him to wear kurta pyjama but Jinnah insisted to wear his new, brand English suit, with matching tie, hat and butler shoes [white and brown colour]. He was taken to his car on a stretcher. It was his last journey. He died on September 11, 1948 as a dejected man with unaccomplished dream. Even after sixty-three years of his death, Pakistan has not become

what its Quaid-i-Azam wanted it to be. He had failed in India and Pakistan failed him.

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