**FORUM**

**QUAID –i-AZAM: LEADER OF MUSLIMS OF INDIA**

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**PREAMABLE**

*The Muslims of India were wanting as a community since the war of independence of 1857 and the world around them had moved at a very fast pace where by the nineteenth century, the notions of self-rule, constitutional reforms ,freedom, nation and nation state set the paradigms of not only political discourse but of political strategy in an undivided India. Despite having defined themselves as a nation, they needed to create a context where this notion could actually be applied. The focus of this paper is the strength of Mr. Jinnah’s leadership. The question which often agitates the minds of students and scholars of history when they seek to examine the quality of leadership through different phases of country’s history that what made Mr. Jinnah’s leadership par excellence? The paper looks into the interrelated issue of the situation of Muslims when British came to rule India. Interestingly, no leader among the Muslims in an undivided India has come to match the stature of Mr. Jinnah’s leadership. It is divided into four parts. The first part discusses the background in which Muslims were wanting as a community. The second part deals with the theoretical approach regarding the question of leadership and finally it takes into account the contextual relationship between Quaid-i-Azam and the Muslims of India.*

**INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

When we speak of Quaid-i-Azam as the leader of Muslims of India, there is inevitably a context in which the Muslims of India could be regarded as the incumbent party which not only ruled India for almost eight or nine centuries but was also dislodged from power.

What one may say here that Muslims in India were getting mixed messages and signals. There was the talk of religious reforms, Muslims being told that their survival lay in the Congress and of course, there was a group of enlightened Muslims who felt that the community needed to be more conscious in political terms in order to protect its interests. There did not seem to be a clear choice for the Muslims which divided them further. Missing in the whole scenario was the presence of a firm leadership which could pull out Muslims from all sorts of fragmentation.

This brings us to the issue of leadership which needs to be studied in a theoretical context.

**THEORETICAL APPROACH**

(Northhouse, 2013) in his book titled, “Leadership: Theory and Practice” has cited a number of scholarly studies Bass (1990), Bryman (1992), Bryman, Collinson, Grint, Jackson and Uhl-Bien (2011), Antonakis, (2012), Gardner (1990), Hickman (2009), Mumford(2006), Rost (1991) that address the question of leadership from a theoretical perspective.

There seems to be two major theoretical approaches running parallel to each other. North house is of the view that leadership has been conceptualized as a trait and behavior on the one hand and on the other, it has been also taken from a relational standpoint and information-processing perspective. One simply cannot help but agreeing with Northhouse that leadership goes beyond a simplistic view.

For the theoretical narrative, I have chosen to focus upon the traits or behavior theory, the reason for doing so happens to be my perception that some leaders are just par excellence. Obviously, one cannot deny the existence of a particular setting and a particular group of people with which they interact, but somehow, they always remain above these two factors. It is for this reason that they are placed in the category of “Great Leaders”.

In theoretical terms, this may be regarded as conceptualizing leadership from a personality perspective . (Northhouse, 2013), the basic premise here suggests that leadership could be described as a combination of certain special traits or characteristics which enables a leader to rather redefine the whole perspective or mould it in such a fashion that followers are motivated to attain a common goal.

My contention is that instead of treating process as central to the phenomenon of leadership, the personality or the trait theory must come into play in order to have a better understanding of the question of leadership.

The trait approach regarding leadership is quite free from haziness as pointed out by Northhouse while referring to (Kirkpatrick and Locke, 1991) who argue that “ It is unequivocally clear that leaders are not like other people.” Northhouse also draws the attention towards the fact that Kirkpatrick and Locke synthesizing the previous researches from a qualitative perspective have identified six traits which distinguish a leader from a non-leader.

Among these six traits are included: 1) drive 2) motivation 3) integrity 4) confidence 5) cognitive ability and 6) task knowledge. Both Kirkpatrick and Locke came to believe that the individuals who later on in their lives become the leaders, they are either born with these traits or do acquire them. These leadership traits, they further argue, could be regarded as the stuff of which the leaders are made of.

My purpose is to relate the trait approach in the theoretical context to Mr. Jinnah’s effective leadership which not only made him to engineer the Pakistan movement but also transformed him from plain Mr. Jinnah to Quaid-i-Azam.

**MR. JINNAH’S LEADERSHIP**

It is interesting to note that Mr. Jinnah had started showing signs of a great leader in the making when he joined the Imperial Legislative Council as an elected member chosen by the people of Bombay at the age thirty three in November 1909 ( Bolitho, 1954). This could be regarded as his first ascent to power and here he seems to be guided by a total sense of motivation or drive pertaining to the issues of his times in general and of India in particular. This sense of drive in actual, was his determination to take up the causes which he found worth addressing. For instance, he was perturbed about the plight of Indians in South Africa and became quite an aggressive advocate of the cause, criticizing the British.

The point which deserves special mention here when one goes through the speech which he delivered in 1912 before the Imperial Legislative Council in1912 that right from the beginning, Mr. Jinnah did have a perfect sense of right and wrong. His determination or drive for the particular causes revolved around that. He was quite clear in his mind that where principles were involved, popularity could not be the criteria. A few lines from the speech would give an idea that how different he had been in his approach and what were the values he cherished most as he put it, “…let me tell you that you have no better friends in this country \_ I mean the friends of the Government \_than the educated classes of this country …we know the blessings of education; we have learnt that from British government ….They have brought us up to this level when we can stand in the Council and deliberate upon the affairs of our nation and of our country” (Bolitho,1954). Again one can find here that Mr. Jinnah having had the exposure of Western education and being trained in the liberal tradition at such European institutions as Lincoln’s Inn had developed an intellectual depth which was going to distinguish him from the community he was going to represent. He also understood that how important it was for a particular nation or country to abreast itself with education.

Perhaps the first interaction of Mr. Jinnah with his community as a professional lawyer happened to be his pleading of the Mussalman Wakf Validating Bill in 1913.He was determined here to fight against the oppressed members of his community who suffered great injustice under the British rule when it came to issues of property. Interestingly, here also, instead of projecting himself as a Muslim lawyer, he adopted an objective approach. His very simple argument was that the issue did not involve the question of public policy as the principles of Islamic Jurisprudence were being applied to the Muhammadon community only (Bolitho, 1954). Thus, Mr. Jinnah had started making his mark not only as a lawyer but by politically being active in the Congress and joining the Muslim League same year, he somehow, very consciously through his moves was trying to transform the political culture in India.

This political culture seemed to be betraying the signs of lack of sincerity and this was the case in particular with the Congress as a political party where most of its leaders did indulge in double talk. Mr. Jinnah, however, was an exception. By 1913, he was a member of the Imperial Legislative Council, a member of the Congress and the Muslim League. The only reason for having the membership of the Congress as well as the Muslim League was none other than that he earnestly believed in the cooperation between Hindus and Muslims.

The point to be noted here that he was genuinely motivated by the desire of Hindu- Muslim unity. Another factor being that he had been growing in confidence not just as a lawyer but as a politician also. And whatever he was doing at this particular point in time was not a part of an extended political planning but rather a reflection of the traits of his personality which did include his sincerity and devotion to a particular cause.

He succeeded in convincing both the Congress and the Muslim League to hold a joint session at Lucknow and in recognition of his efforts , was given the title of “ Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim Unity.’’ And here also he applied logic and believed in winning the trust of the other party i-e., Hindus through persuasion. The biggest feature of the Lucknow pact was the principle of separate electorates. Speaking in favour of it, he argued, “As far as I understand, the demand for separate electorates is not a matter of policy but a matter of necessity to the Muslims….If they are determined to have separate electorates, no resistance should be shown to their demands.” (Bolitho, 1954). In persuading the Congress and the Muslim League to have a better understanding, he was moving towards a leadership role in the more broader political sense. And perhaps the confidence that he could lead his community towards a better future made him not to keep any reservations. As he put it, “We want no favours and crave for no partial treatment. That is demoralizing to the community and injurious to the State. The Mussalmans must learn to have self-respect.” This is how he had been trying to influence the Muslim thought in India, again the trait of a great leader.

This influencing of the minds and Mr. Jinnah’s intellectual ability to read into a particular situation could be found in the fact that he was very much disturbed by the British measures like the passing of Rowlatt Act, the Jalianwalla Bagh incident and the decision to bring to an end the institution of caliphate. However, he simply could have not approved of the high-handed tactics being adopted by the Congress regarding the freedom of India and the domination of Congress by Hindu revivalist parties and Mr. Gandhi’s support to them. For these particular reasons, he resigned from the Congress in1920 after the party’s session at Nagpur.

He never courted the desire for a public office and preferred to take a retreat in politics if it came into conflict with his principles and values, as he put it “ …. I first decide what is right and I do it. The people come around me and the opposition vanishes.” (Bolitho,1954).His pleading of the rights of Muslims as a minority after the famous Nehru Report which reduced the Hindu-Muslim question in India just to a cultural one( Querishi,1965) is a case in point. Mr. Jinnah very aptly declared the recommendations of the committee to be quite unsatisfactory as the constitution which the committee envisaged not only was bound to make majorities oppressive and minorities insecure but was also going to lead to “revolution and civil war” (Bolitho,1954).

The later developments made it clear that Mr. Jinnah was never vague about helping the cause of Muslims and the trait of a great leader i-e., the task knowledge was his forte. And this very important trait really made him Quaid-i-Azam. Prior to the adoption of the famous Lahore Resolution, Mr. Jinnah in February 1940 said that “any constitutional settlement must recognize that India was not one nation but two, and the Muslims would not accept the arbitrament of any body, Indian or British, but would determine their destiny themselves.” (Hodson, 1985). He rallied the Muslims of India in support of the Pakistan Resolution adopted in March 1940 which proved that he knew how to set the directions and then apply the required skills for the attainment of a common goal.

He was well-versed with the British constitutional framework and had a deep insight regarding the rationale behind the parliamentary institutions. He argued very logically that how concepts like democracy could turn into disadvantage for the minority in a heterogeneous nation like India (Bolitho, 1954). His strategy was based on a planning which tried to secure advantage over the opponent but in a manner or fashion which simply could be regarded as objective. For instance, he forwarding some proposals to the Viceroy Lord Linlithgow in 1940 regarding Muslim support to British war effort and demanding at the same time division of India in the future constitutional arrangements termed these proposals as “benevolent neutrality.”

One of the greatest assets of Mr. Jinnah happened to be his tenacity which of course was related to his devotion to the Muslim cause. The developments from 1942 to August 1947 suggest that the British Empire had been going through a very difficult phase. Not only it confronted the issues relating to the war but it seemed that Congress was in a mood to turn its resistance to the British rule in some sort of a battle. To pacify the Congress, the British government came up one proposal after the other. However, the manner in which Mr. Jinnah dealt with both the British and the Congress (for instance be it the Cripps offer and the Congress civil disobedience movement) turning it into a political advantage for the Muslims showed the measure of his leadership. The Muslim League’s overwhelming victory in the 1946 elections established beyond doubt that only the League represented the Muslim India, the credit for it goes to Mr. Jinnah’s leadership. The acceptance and then the rejection of the Cabinet Mission plan in 1946 reflected strongly upon his diplomatic skills. Above all the parleys that he had with the last Viceroy of India Lord Mountbatten ultimately leading to the partition of India in 1947 could be regarded as a test in his persuasion skills.

He built up the case of the division of India on a very sound ground. He referred to the Congress interpretation of the Cabinet Mission Plan and in particular, Sardar Patel’s declaration that he would never accept parity in the central government (Seervai, 2005). Mr. Jinnah’s expression of the fear to having to deal with the probability of a centre permanently dominated by the Congress made even a biased Viceroy like Mountbatten to admit that *“…Mr*. *Jinnah’s* *fears* *had* *some* *foundation*. *Therefore*, *it* *was* *to* *be* *considered* *that* *the* *Cabinet* *Mission* *Plan* *was* *dead*.” (Seervai, 2005).

It would not be wrong to suggest that he owned the Muslim masses and the sense of ownership made him more conscious of his role as a leader. For instance, his call for direct action in 1946 made him realize that he might be imprisoned by the British in response but he was willing even to take that risk instead of budging from his set objective. As it has been noted, “Jinnah’s dominant characteristic was his tenacity. Once he made up his mind, nothing in the world could divert him from his chosen objective. *No* *temptation, no bribe, no pressure* had the slightest effect, and it is a measure of the man that he succeeded in creating a new country\_ Pakistan….” (Seervai, 2005).

**CONCLUSIONS**

As a matter of fact, the quality of leadership determines whether the process would remain sustained. Through his leadership Mr. Jinnah demonstrated that how important it is for a leader to carry certain attributes. The process might be there but charisma associated with a leader (which may also be termed as influence in theoretical terms) is so essential for making the process result-oriented.

The strength of Mr. Jinnah’s leadership lay in the fact that he did try to introduce an alternative political culture in India. What made his leadership par excellence was the fact that he had a strong sense of right and wrong. He was very clear in his mind when it came to principles. He never yearned for popularity, rather his greatness as a leader made him popular. His western education and his training at Lincoln’s Inn made him liberal in his approach to problems. It also helped him in dealing with the conservatives in his own community and handle those in the Congress who tried to be more and more exclusive.

Being a leader in the true sense of the word, he redefined the whole Muslim perspective in India and came to mould the beliefs, attitudes and course of action through the attributes of his character. He became Quaid-i-Azam or the great leader because he preferred for his followers the same values which he had chosen for himself. Among these values happened to be his belief in self-respect and esteem, integrity and sincerity of purpose. These were the norms which defined the parameters of his leadership. All these norms made Muslims not only to identify themselves with Mr. Jinnah but to embrace the kind of Muslim identity that Quaid –i- Azam portrayed.

My interpretation is that Mr. Jinnah had been the most charismatic leader of the Muslims of India and nobody could come close to matching his stature.

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