

Pakistan, the noble legacy of Quaid-e-Azam

Bashy Quraishy

First of all, let me thank, Iqbal Academy and Jannab Sabir Bhai for honouring me with this task of saying few words on Quaid Ka Pakistan.

Secondly, you have to pardon me if my URDU language skills are not up to date. In the last 45 years, I was unfortunate not to use this beautiful and poetic language in daily life.

Some revisionist people criticize Pakistan and few even go so far as to question the integrity of Quaid-e-Azam in demanding a separate homeland for the Muslims of Hindustan. This modern disease has even spread to those who live in the West but have Pakistani roots. It is however interesting that all these critical people studied in Pakistani schools, traveled on Pakistani passports and have families in that country.

Painting a realistic image of Pakistan in our young people's minds is the only way they can hope to have a sense of belonging to the country and the elderly generation has a duty to provide a great deal in helping such parents and families living abroad whose roots are still fastened firmly with this land.

Coming back to the topic, it is very difficult to add something new or something that is not known about him. Yet the paradox is that the younger generation has to be reminded of his contribution to the history of Muslims of the Subcontinent

What I want to share with you about Quaid, is not only the information from history books, magazines and films, but also what was told to me by my father and those who saw the Quaid, worked for the cause of Pakistan and saw the creation of Pak Surzammen.

Pakistan's story is so much linked with the life of the Quaid -e-Azam that one cannot be told without the other. So who was this great man, who with the help of his type writer and an adoring sister created the largest country for Muslims in the world in a span of few years.

In his biography of titled "*Jinnah of Pakistan*", the American historian, Stanley Wolpert, makes the following observation that so accurately describes the legacy of Quaid and his footprint on history:

"Few individuals significantly alter the course of history. Fewer still modify the map of the world. Hardly anyone can be credited with creating a nation-state. Muhammad Ali Jinnah did all three."

During his lifetime, he brought the wisdom to walk in the path of honor, the courage to follow his convictions, and an abiding compassion for others. He enriched us all by the nobility of his spirit.

Mohammad Ali Jinnah - life and times

According to Sarojini Naidu, a famous Congress politician, close friend and follower of Gandhi but also author of Quaid's first biography, Quaid's ancestors were Hindu Rajput who converted to Islam. Jinnah's family belonged to the Ismaili Khoja branch of Shi'a Islam.

He studied at several schools at the Sindh-Madrassa-tul-Islam in Karachi; briefly at the Gokal Das Tej Primary School in Bombay; and finally at the Christian Missionary Society High School in Karachi, where, at age sixteen, he passed the matriculation examination of the University of Bombay. **In 1892, at the age of only 16**, he sailed to England to study and in 3 years, at age 19, he became the **youngest Indian to be called to the bar in England**.

During his student years in England, Jinnah came under the influence of 19th-century British liberalism, and his education included exposure to the idea of the democratic nation and progressive politics. But later as an Indian intellectual and political authority, Jinnah would find his commitment to the Western ideal of the nation-state and the reality of Indian society of many religions, cultures and ethnic groups difficult to reconcile during his later political career.

In 1896 he returned to India and settled in Bombay. He built a house in Malabar Hill, later known as Jinnah House. He became a successful lawyer, gaining particular fame for his skilled handling. His reputation as a skilled lawyer prompted Indian leader Bal Gangadhar Tilak to hire him as defense counsel for his sedition trial in 1905. Quaid argued that it was not sedition for an Indian to demand freedom and self-government in his own country.

Soon after his return to India, he joined the **Indian National Congress**, which was the largest political organization in India. Like most of the Congress at the time, Jinnah **did not favor outright independence**, considering British influences on education, law, culture and industry as beneficial to India.

Quaid had initially avoided joining the **All India Muslim League**, founded in 1906 because he regarded it as too religiously oriented. However he decided to provide leadership to the Muslim minority. His efforts to work for all Indians was so much respected that he was called; Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim Unity.

Eventually, he **joined the Muslim League in 1913** and became the President at the 1916 session in Lucknow. Jinnah was the architect of the 1916 Lucknow Pact between the Congress and the League, bringing them together on most issues regarding self-government and presenting a united front to the British.

Jinnah broke with the Congress in 1920 when the Congress leader, Mohandas Gandhi, launched a law violating Non-Cooperation Movement against the British, which a temperamentally law abiding barrister Jinnah disapproved of. One Western journalist asked Quaid, why he never went to jail while all Congress leaders like Gandhi, Nehru, Patel and Baldev Singh have been in many times in prison. Quaid replies: I am a parliamentarian. Prison is for criminals.

In 1924 Quaid, officially reorganized the Muslim League and devoted the next seven years attempting to bring about unity among various ranks of Muslims and to develop a rational formula to effect a Hindu Muslim settlement, which he considered the pre condition for Indian freedom. This task was very difficult and was frustrated in the start.

He once remarked that every time, I put my hand in the pocket, I find forged coins, refereeing to disunity and internal fight among Muslim leaders.

Even if he was working tirelessly to unite Muslims in Hindustan, he attended several unity conferences between Congress and Muslim League. He wrote the **Delhi Muslim Proposals in 1927**, pleaded for the incorporation of the basic Muslim demands in the Nehru report, and formulated the "Fourteen Points"

Furthermore, in **1927**, **Quaid entered negotiations with Muslim and Hindu leaders** on the issue of a future constitution, during the struggle against the all-British Simon Commission. The Muslim League wanted separate electorates while the Nehru Report favored joint electorates. Quaid personally opposed separate electorates, but accepted the decision of his party. He then drafted compromises and put forth demands that he thought would satisfy both. These became known as the **14 points of Mr. Jinnah**. However, they were rejected by the Congress and other political parties.

The British government called **2 Round Table Conferences in London** to let Hindustani leaders to work out their differences, but talks failed. Quaid was so disillusioned by the breakdown of talks, that in **1931 he relocated to London in order to practice in the Privy Council Bar**.

That was a dark time for Muslims in India. But luckily, prominent Muslim leaders like Alama Iqbal, the Aga Khan and Choudhary Rahmat Ali made efforts to convince Quaid to return from London to India and take charge of a now-reunited Muslim League.

In 1934 Quaid returned and began to **re-organize the party**, being closely assisted by Liaquat Ali Khan, who would act as his right-hand man.

In the **1937 elections to the Central Legislative Assembly**, the League emerged as a competent party, capturing a significant number of seats under the Muslim electorate, but lost in the Muslim-majority Punjab, Sindh and the North-West Frontier Province.

After the election success, Quaid offered an alliance with the Congress - both bodies would face the British together, but the Congress had to share power, accept separate electorates and the League as the representative of India's Muslims. That was a proof of **Quaid was willing to go a long way to have an independent united Hindustan where Hindus and Muslims would be equal partners**.

The latter two terms were unacceptable to the Congress, which had its own national Muslim leaders and membership and adhered to One India. Even as Quaid held talks with Congress president Rajendra Prasad, Congress leaders suspected that Quaid would use his position as a lever for exaggerated demands and obstruct government, and demanded that the League merge with the Congress.

The talks failed, and while Quaid declared the resignation of all legislators from provincial and central offices in 1938 as a "Day of Deliverance" from Hindu domination, some historians assert that he remained hopeful for an agreement.

But it was becoming clearer to Quaid and his associates that may be Congress was interested in such solution. Gandhi often said to Quaid; " Let the British leave. Afterward, we can figure out a solution.

In one of his famous letters, Quaid asked Gandhi to be more precise as to how the power would be distributed. Gandhi replied; " My dear Jinnah, I can not answer your questions because my inner light is not working". Quaid wrote back;" To hell with your inner light. Why do not you admit that you have no answer to what I am

asking”.

The idea of Pakistan

By the way, a wish for a separate homeland for Muslims of Hindustan was in the air for sometime.

In a speech to the Muslim League in 1930, **Alama Iqbal** raised the idea of an **independent state for Muslims in "Northwest India."** **Choudhary Rahmat Ali** published a pamphlet in 1933 advocating a state called "Pakistan".

Following the failure to work with the Congress, Quaid, who had embraced separate electorates and the exclusive right of the Muslim League to represent Muslims, was converted to the idea that Muslims needed a separate state to protect their rights. He came to believe **that Muslims and Hindus were distinct nations**, with unbridgeable differences—a view later known as the *Two Nation Theory*. Quaid declared that a united India would lead to the marginalization of Muslims, and eventually civil war between Hindus and Muslims. This change of view may have occurred through his correspondence with Alama Iqbal, who was close to him.

In the session in **Lahore in 1940**, the **Pakistan resolution** was adopted as the main goal of the Muslim League. The resolution was rejected outright by the Congress, and criticized by many Muslim leaders like **Maulana Abul Kalam Azad**, **Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan**, **Syed Ab'ul Ala Maududi** and the **Jamaat-e-Islami**.

On 26 July 1943, Quaid was stabbed and wounded by a member of the extremist **Khaksars** in an attempted assassination.

During the mission of British minister Stafford Cripps, Jinnah demanded parity between the number of Congress and League ministers, the League's exclusive right to appoint Muslims and a right for Muslim-majority provinces to secede, leading to the breakdown of talks. When it became clear to both British and Congress party that Quaid and Muslim League would not budge from its demand, they made a common front against him.

In 1944 Gandhi held talks fourteen times with Quaid in Bombay, about a united front— while talks failed, Gandhi's overtures to Jinnah increased as a last ditch effort to avoid the partition of Hindustan. But League was becoming very representative of all Muslims. The League's influence increased in the Punjab after the **death of Unionist leader Sikander Hyat Khan in 1942**.

In the 1946 elections for the Constituent Assembly of India, the Congress won most of the elected seats, while the **League won a large majority of Muslim electorate seats**.

Interim Government portfolios were announced on 25 October 1946. **Muslim Leaguers were sworn in on 26 October 1946**. The League entered the interim government, but **Quaid refrained from accepting office for himself**. This was credited as a major victory for Quaid, as the League entered government having rejected both plans, and was allowed to appoint an equal number of ministers despite being the minority party. The coalition was unable to work, resulting in a rising feeling within the Congress that independence of Pakistan was the only way of avoiding political chaos and possible civil war.

Some revisionist historians like H M Seervai and Ayesha Jalal assert that Quaid never wanted partition of India. It was actually the outcome of the Congress

leaders being unwilling to share power with the Muslim League. It is asserted that Quaid only used the Pakistan demand as a method to mobilize support to obtain significant political rights for Muslims. Whatever the case may be, looking at the poor situation of Indian Muslims today and their second class status, Pakistanis should be grateful that Quaid gave up the idea of a united India after the British departure and insisted that Muslims in Hindustan should have their own homeland.

Quaid has gained the admiration of major Indian nationalist politicians like Lal Krishna Advani—whose comments praising Jinnah caused an uproar in his own Bharatiya Janata Party Jaswant Singh likewise praised Jinnah for standing up to the Indian National Congress and the British. Everyone from Mountbaton, Gandhi, Nehru down to ordinary persons, friend and foe all agreed that during his lifetime, he brought the wisdom to walk in the path of honor, the courage to follow his convictions, and an abiding compassion for others. He enriched us all by the nobility of his spirit.

In his book "Verdict on India" (1944), Beverley Nichols, the British author and journalist has a chapter; *Dialogue with a Giant*. This is about his meeting with Quaid. He wrote; " Mr. Jinnah is in a position of unique strategic importance. He can sway the battle this way or that as he chooses. His 100 million Muslims will march to the left, to the right, to the front, to the rear at his bidding and at nobody else's. If Gandhi goes, there is Nehru or Rajgopal or Paten or a dozen others. But if Jinnah goes, who is there?"

Jinnah's Vision for Pakistan

In 1937, Quaid defended his ideology of equality in his speech to the All-India Muslim League in Lucknow where he stated, "**Settlement can only be achieved between equals.**" He also had a rebuttal to Nehru's statement which argued that the only two parties that mattered in India were the British Raj and INC. Jinnah stated that the Muslim League was the third and "equal partner" within Indian politics.

Quaid gave a precise definition of the term 'Pakistan' in 1941 at Lahore in which he stated: "Some confusion prevails in the minds of some individuals in regard to the use of the word 'Pakistan'. This word has become synonymous with the Lahore resolution owing to the fact that it is a convenient and compendious method of describing it.

Whilst giving an interview to **American press representatives in July 1942**, when asked by one of the journalists whether the Muslims were a nation or not, Quaid replied:

"We are a nation with our own distinctive culture and civilization, language and literature, art and architecture, names and nomenclature, sense of values and proportion, legal laws and moral codes, customs and calendar, history and traditions, aptitudes and ambitions, in short, we have our own distinctive outlook on life and of life. By all cannons of international law we are a nation."

A controversy has raged in Pakistan about whether Jinnah wanted Pakistan to be a secular state or an Islamic state. His views as expressed in his policy speech on 11 August 1947 said: "**I think we should keep that in front of us as our ideal and you will find that in course of time Hindus would cease to be Hindus and Muslims would 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**". Jinnah, 11 August 1947 - presiding over the constituent assembly.

Quaid wanted a secular state, but with Islamic principles. The reason is that a true Islamic state is not a theocratic state

"Pakistan is not going to be a theocratic State to be ruled by priests with a divine mission. We have many non-Muslims - Hindus, Christians, and Parsis - but they are all Pakistanis. They will enjoy the same rights and privileges as any other citizens and will play their rightful part in the affairs of Pakistan". Broadcast talk to the people of the United States of America on Pakistan recorded February 1948

Inaugurating the assembly on 11 August 1947, Quaid spoke of an inclusive and pluralist democracy promising equal rights for all citizens regardless of religion, caste or creed.

This address is a cause of much debate in Pakistan as, on its basis, many claim that Jinnah wanted a secular state while supporters of Islamic Pakistan assert that this speech is being taken out of context when compared to other speeches by him.

On 11 October 1947, in an address to Civil, Naval, Military and Air Force Officers of Pakistan Government, Karachi, he said:

"We should have a State in which we could live and breathe as free men and which we could develop according to our own lights and culture and where principles of Islamic social justice could find free play".

On 21 February 1948, in an address to the officers and men of the 5th Heavy and 6th Light Regiments in Malir, Karachi, he said:

"You have to stand guard over the development and maintenance of Islamic democracy, Islamic social justice and the equality of manhood in your own native soil. With faith, discipline and selfless devotion to duty, there is nothing worthwhile that you cannot achieve".

Pakistan today

It is true that the political situation in Pakistan is not what Quaid would have liked. Political elite is dishonest and non-visionary, officials are greedy. Nepotism and corruption is wide spread. There is a lack of organization, poverty is rampant and violence is extreme. No one can deny that.

I also know people who compare Pakistan with India and argue that may be partition was wrong. I think that these people have seen too many Bollywood movies. Such comparisons are not only false but also neglect some historical facts.

If you look at the geographical positioning of Pakistan, you will notice that it is on the outer edges of India. The British did not built any infrastructure, industry, educational institutions, hospitals, sports complexes, leisure facilities or any other development scheme. Every thing was built in that areas which became India. The only thing, the area produced was cotton and soldiers. On top of this, the money and weapons which India was obliged to transfer to Pakistan never materialized.

So it is in such depressing circumstances, Pakistan took its first steps. Comparing that time to today, one can see that Pakistan withal its short coming has done remarkably well.

62 years is a very short span of time in history. I am very hopeful and we must have faith in the capability of our coming generations. As Alama Iqbal so beautifully said;
Zara Num hoo tou ye matti, bardi zarkheez hay saqi.

External links

- . "Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah". *Government of Pakistan Website*.
- . "Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah". *The Jinnah Society*.
- . "Jinnah: South Asia's greatest ever leader".
- . *BBC's Poll for South Asia's greatest ever leader*.
- . "The Father of Pakistan". *The Most Influential Asians of the Century by TIME*.
- . "Muhammad Ali Jinnah (1876-1948)". *Story of Pakistan*.
- . "Jinnah's speech to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan". 11 August 1947.
- . "Jinnah's Thought at a Glance". *Yes Pakistan.com*.
- . "Mohammed Ali Jinnah (1876-1948)". *Harappa.com*.
- . "Pictures of Quaid (Album)". *Urdu Point*.
- . "South Asia's Clarence Darrow". *Chowk*.
- . "I Remember Jinnah". *Daily Dawn (newspaper)*.
- . "1947 - August". *Chronicles Of Pakistan*.