

# WHAT WAS THE ORIGINAL VISION BEHIND THE CREATION OF PAKISTAN

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## INTERVIEW

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### **What was the original vision behind the creation of Pakistan?**

Pakistan represents the desire and the historical urge of the Muslims of British India to live their lives in accordance with the values of Islam.

Muslims had been the rulers of almost whole of the Indian subcontinent for about a thousand years, having a host of political, cultural and economic achievements to their credit. Yet, da'wah (the calling of people to Islam) had been the critical missing dimension. Whatever da'wah work was done came from individual souls, traders, travelers, teachers, Ulama and Mashaikh. The rulers and those who wielded power showed least concern for this primary mission. The result was that even after such a long rule Muslims remained a minority In India, less than twenty-five percent of the population. Even in Delhi, the seat of power, Muslims remained a minority.

The British Empire was able to wrest political control of India from the weakened Muslim Mughal rulers. Later, following the First World War, the receding of colonialism around the world saw political power reverting to the original rulers of occupied countries (see the recent example of Hong Kong reverting to Chinese rule). However, in India, the British decided to establish the democratic 'numbers' system. Muslims soon realized that freedom' from British rule would lead to Hindu domination of India, in the 1920s, this led Muslim intellectuals to seek alternative strategies which would fulfill Muslim aspirations for political freedom as well as cultural and ideological Independence, and still be within the framework of democracy.

The turning point came in the famous 1930 Presidential address of Alama Muhammad Iqbal in which he articulated the vision and aspiration of the Muslims of India:

- a) Islam is not just a religion: it is a complete way of life, a social system, a law and a state. All of these are inseparable from each other.
- b) Nationalism (whether based on race, territory or language) was fundamentally opposed to the Islamic outlook on life which was based solely on faith, values and deen.
- c) Islam could be 'centralized' In Muslim-majority areas, laying down the parameters for division of India into Muslim and non-Muslim sovereignties.

On March 23<sup>rd</sup> 1940, the Muslim League under the leadership of Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad All Jinnah formally adopted the two-nation' theory and Pakistan finally came into being on August 14<sup>th</sup>, 1947 as a result of a popular, democratic and ideological movement. In which Muslims of India

belonging to all parts of the subcontinent participated, struggled and sacrificed for the goal of establishment a homeland for Islam.

### **Has Pakistan been a failure?**

There is some truth in the statement that the people of Pakistan have failed to live up to the ideals for which Pakistan was established. BUT the creation of Pakistan was not a mistake, indeed, history has vindicated the two-nation theory and Pakistan has been a pace-setter for the rest of the Muslim world in many ways:

- a) First and foremost, establishment of Pakistan rekindled the urge of the Islamic ummah to direct their freedom movement towards the establishment of a socio-political order based on Islamic values and principles. Reintegration of religion, state and society became the rallying point. The constitutional issues raised in Pakistan have had their echo among the lawmakers all over the Muslim world. Pakistan was the first country to declare itself as an Islamic Republic. This example was then followed by Mauritania and Iran. Pakistan's Islamic legislation influenced many Muslim countries, including Egypt, Jordan, Iran, Malaysia, and Sudan.
- b) Robust and wide-ranging Intellectual work on the exposition of the Islamic state, society and economy done by Muslim scholars in Pakistan has Influenced the main currents of Islamic thought all over the Muslim world and beyond, Despite all failings and weaknesses, establishment of Pakistan has been blessing for the people of Pakistan, some fifteen million Muslims migrated from different parts of India to seek security and opportunity.
- c) Compare Pakistan's situation with that of the Muslims in India, Muslims in India represents about 15% of the total population, yet economically they are in a worse position than the untouchables. They are woefully under- represented In the Indian Army (less than 1%) and Civil Service (less than 2%). we hear constantly of anti-Muslim riots in Indian (over ten thousand riots since 1947). The demolition of the Babri mosque was just the tip of the iceberg. Muslims are being discriminated against in every field, religion, culture, language, economy, services and what not in Pakistan there is great security, respect and tolerance. The rate of economic growth has been averaging 6-7%. Per capita income is 50% more than that in India. The Muslims are definitely better off, whatever be the other failings.
- d) Pakistan has successfully faced many challenges including the US-led nuclear boycott and sanctions. Despite the obstacles put in its way and its paucity of resources Pakistan has managed to develop a nuclear deterrent which is essential for its security. Pakistan perfected the process of enriching uranium in just 7 years (it took the USA 21 years to do this)!

- e) During the Afghan war Pakistan accommodated over 3 million Afghan refugees for over 12 years. We shared our bread with them and opened our homes, bazaars and schools to them. They were treated as our brothers and sisters. There were no riots and explosion of crime. Pakistan helped the Muslims of Afghanistan face the internal challenge (1974 onwards) and the Russian invasion (December 1995) with full courage and determination. The strength of the Muslim resistance to the invasion finally led to the collapse of communism itself. The real credit goes to the heroic struggle of the Afghan Mujahideen, but Pakistan support and co-participation stands out as milestone.

All of the above points, among others show the remarkable potential of Pakistan and the Muslim ummah. This is only one side of the story, emphasized only to show the fallacy of those who try to project Pakistan as "a state that has failed". Nevertheless there have been serious failures and betrayals ideological, moral, political, and economic. Ethnic, parochial and sectarian fires have been fanned. East Pakistan was lost not merely for external aggression, which was very much there, but also for unpardonable domestic lapses and blunders. Ideological transformation that was the real driving force was not fully achieved. Two-thirds of Kashmir is still in Indian occupation, international indebtedness has even put a dent on the country's economic sovereignty. All these aspects represent challenges yet to be faced.

#### **What are the biggest challenges facing Pakistan?**

1. The ideological challenge: Most Important in my view is the ideological tension, artificially Imposed over the country by the secular forces, who maneuvered to get control over the state machinery, media and the economy, during the early years of independence. The Quaid-e-Azam died In September 1948 and even during the one year his health had collapsed. The party that led the movement lacked clarity of vision, harmony, commitment and leadership. In fact it was overtaken by the vested interests that had no role in the freedom struggle. This new class tried to impose its own hegemony of course in collaboration with outside powers. Politicians, civil bureaucrats and military adventurists engineered a series of counter-revolutions, directed towards thrusting from above secular, capitalistic and socialistic ideologies. The energies of the nation were wasted in Ideological and political tensions and conflicts. Although every secular and despotic effort was finally frustrated, the resources that should have been used in building a just social order based on the ideology that inspired the Pakistan movement were eaten away in this tug-of-war between the people and its despotic rulers. The Objectives Resolution and the Islamic and democratic provisions of the three constitutions (1956, 1962, and 1973) symbolize the real defeat of secular and socialist forces. Yet historic opportunities of building the nation and state were lost in this mutual struggle.

2. The exploitative class: Economic and political powers continue to be in the hands of an exploitative class, a few thousand families that dominate fields of politics, economy, administration and services. Land reforms have been frustrated with the result that some six thousand big landlords own over fifty percent of the farm land. The new urban economy is also dominated by a class of robber-barons. Some eighty percent of the members of the national and provincial assemblies come from these classes, whose relatives also hold key positions in civil and military bureaucracies. This class has high jacked political and economic power. First national elections took place in 1970, twenty-three years after independence. Next elections took place in 1985, after another fifteen years, and that took on a non-party basis. Four elections have been held after that, symbolizing political instability. Yet, with democratic freedoms things are now beginning to change. There is general disenchantment from politicians and political parties involved in this misgovernance. The Islamic Movement is now targeting freedom from the yoke of this exploitative class and its full scale accountability; it is the change of system and the change of leadership that is the crying need of the hour.
3. Corruption and lack of accountability: The amount of corruption, tax evasion and loan defaulting occurring in Pakistan is truly staggering. Some fifteen thousand people have defaulted to the tune of 130 billion rupees: this is equivalent to one-third of the total bank advances available in the entire country. Tax evasion and corruption amounts to 500 billion rupees a year: this is equivalent to one-quarter of Pakistan's total Gross National Product (GNP)! Pakistan's external debt stands at \$30 billion. Taking into account internal indebtedness (Rs. 1,000 billion), what all this means is that every man, woman and child in Pakistan is in debt to the tune of over fifteen thousand rupees each - all through no fault of their own, but because of a few thousand thieving individuals. The Islamic movement has taken a firm stance on Ehtesab (accountability) in government, administration, politicians and economy to solve this problem.
4. Change of the electoral system: Real power in Pakistan is not in the hands of the people but in the hands of a maximum of five thousand land-owning families and the new capitalists. For too long power simply moved within these families. They assume that they have an automatic right to wield political power, indeed, the ex-Prime Minister of Pakistan, Benazir Bhutto, was so dismissive of the people that she did not even bother to show up in the Pakistani senate for three years! To counter this culture of arrogance and corruption the Islamic movement has launched a movement of mass-awakening. The MPs belonging to the movement Alhamdulillah have set an example of clean politics, even refusing to avail of the facilities which are regarded as the entitlement of the MNAs and MPAs. The movement is also insisting that the electoral system should be so changed that common people could

get elected and the constitutional guidelines for the election of honest and clean persons be translated into reality.

5. Education: The literacy rate stands at 30% and the number of educated people at 2-3% is a disgrace. Human resource development, and its moral training, must be priority number one for the leadership of tomorrow. The Islamic movement in Pakistan has launched a mass education movement and has established over 700 primary schools throughout Pakistan. In the last three years, our target is to provide every village in Pakistan with a primary school within ten years, Insha Allah, our socio-political programme also focuses on provision of education, housing and health care for all people and jobs and economic opportunities for the common man to enable the people to have an honorable life.

### **The Pakistani public seems to be fed up with its politicians. What is the way forward?**

There can be no mistaking the disillusionment of the people of Pakistan with the political process. This is borne out by the fact that a fewer percentage of the electorate are actually bothering to even vote during the elections (1988: 55%, 1995:40%, 1997: 55%). The dumping of Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party in the last elections was a good sign. The people have clearly given Nawaz Sharif's Muslim League one final chance. This reflects the growing awareness of the people.

I believe that free and fair elections are very important to the political process and the future well-being of Pakistan, I am confident that a better leadership will emerge in Pakistan but this may take another 2-5 elections. Democracy and political accountability are essential for good government. The Islamic movement is committed to this path.

### **Are you hopeful about the future of Pakistan?**

Yes, I am. I believe that there was a Divine design behind the creation of Pakistan and am certain that Pakistan will come back to its original vision. Pakistan, Afghanistan, Turkey, Iran and central Asia seem destined to play a very important role in the near future. I think that the ex-Turkish Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan's 'D8' Idea is a very revolutionary idea and has great potential and shows the way forward for regional Muslim groupings.

We can see a clear return to Islamic values amongst Muslim youth. We are getting the same message from other Muslim countries. Pakistan is destined to regain its original vision as day follows night; the darkness is only a phase. This will, of course, require effort and sacrifice that is the law of nature.

The Jamaat-e-Islami played a key role in bringing down Benazir Bhutto's regime. Bringing up a good Muslim leadership is now the challenge. I cannot predict how long this may take, but the overall trend is clear enough, I see silver linings on the horizon.

### **Have the people of Pakistan become more Islamic in the last 50 years?**

This is a very difficult question. There is no sociological or empirical evidence available to give a definite answer, so mine can only be a subjective assessment. However, there are a few indicators which we can take into consideration:

- The number of mosques and attendance for prayers therein has increased, congregational Maghreb prayers even inside bazaars are now a common phenomenon. Most mosques on Fridays are full to overflowing, so is observance of fast and the felicities of Ramadan, world Bank reports show that the numbers of poor people who are being helped by private charitable donations (Zakat and sadaqah) are increasing every year, almost twenty- eight percent of poverty alleviation has taken place through this voluntary process. The number of pilgrims to Makkah is increasing also. The magnitude of the response of the youth to the rallying call of Islam and to the Jihad in Afghanistan, Kashmir, Bosnia, Chechniya are indicators of this new phenomenon.

However, there are also several negative indicators:

- There has been an Increase In certain forms of criminal activity in Pakistan. The law and order situation in certain areas is very bad. Economic exploitation is rampant. The cultural influence of the West through the electronic media has also Increased (the Urdu language media is invariably pro-Islamic).

This situation can be described as a 'phenomenon of polarization'. The influence of both good and bad has Increased, in the long run, though, I am convinced that the Influence of good will become dominant, Insha Allah. Today, even secular parties In Pakistan have to cloak their political manifestos in the language of Islam to appeal to the people. All the people of Pakistan love Islam. It is ingrained in the national psyche. They have also tried all other issues - capitalism, socialism, secularism, ethnic nationalism. All of them have failed, Islam Is the only alternative that gives me hope.

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