
UNIT 8 MUSLIM THOUGHT: SIR SYED AHMED KHAN, MOHAMMED IQBAL, MAULANA MAUDOODI AND MOHAMMED ALI JINNAH

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8.1 INTRODUCTION

The Muslim thought in modern India can be understood properly only in its larger historical setting. It is important to note that the evolution of the Muslim political thought was a complex phenomenon involving historical context of the Muslims' social, cultural and political life and interactive process with the colonial rule which had been established in India particularly in the aftermath of the Revolt of 1857. Several issues had emerged, such as relative backwardness of Muslims in relation to modern tendencies which had come in the wake of the establishment of the colonial rule. The question of accommodation of various social groups including Muslims in the existing and future power structures became an important issue which was widely debated among all groups. Equally important was the issue of religious-cultural identity of various communities which went through a process of redefinition in the late nineteenth century as well as the first half of the twentieth century. All these issues emerged over the years with varying responses from different social groups which, in the long run, affected inter-community relations. These developments also affected the political processes which were unfolding in the course of an articulation of anti-colonial nationalist ideology.

While all these issues were matter of concern for all, it is important to recognise that the response of the Muslims to all these issues was not uniform but varied since the Muslims did not constitute a monolithic community. The Muslims were divided on lines of language, region and class as any other religious community. When a community is vertically as well as horizontally divided, the response to any issue would most certainly be as divided. It is vitally important to recognise that thoughts of several leaders, that we shall be shortly discussing, can only be seen in their evolutionary perspectives since they were not fixed in a timeframe and were constantly evolving. In the course of evolution of the thoughts of the person under discussion we shall discover that in certain respects there is a continuity while in others there is a contradiction. The contradiction and continuity may be seen as the running thread in the thoughts of all those under discussion. It is up to the readers to discern the meaning of those thoughts in historical time.

8.2 SIR SYED AHMAD KHAN (1817-1898)

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was one of the most formidable figures of the late nineteenth century India. He emerged on the Indian scene as one of the great reformers, educationist and moderniser within the Muslim community. He was born on 17th October 1817 in one of the respected families associated with the Mughal court.. Sir Syed was a direct witness to the declining fortunes of the Mughals and was conscious about the fact that while the glory of the Mughals was as good as gone, the political force which was gaining ground was that of the British. In any case, the British East India Company had already gained tremendous power in the eastern part of India in the second half of the eighteenth century. Gradually it had been spreading its influence in other parts of India as well. The British had started knocking on the doors of Delhi under the Mughals and by 1803 they had succeeded in confining the Mughal rulers within the precincts of the *Qila-i-Mualla* (The Red Fort). It was a part of the growing experience of Syed Ahmad Khan to have seen that the Mughals were surviving on the suffrage of the British since 1803. It is not surprising therefore that Syed Ahmad Khan took a minor post with the British at the age of twenty one years despite some opposition in the family. Subsequently he passed the examination of the Munsif and was appointed at Mainpuri. In 1842 he was transferred to Fatehpur Sikri and in 1846 re-posted at Delhi and stayed here for about nine years. During his stay at Delhi he engaged himself in academic pursuits and apart from other things, he produced an important work *Asar-us-Sanadeedd*, a monumental work on the monuments of Delhi which was widely acclaimed. Later in 1855 he was given promotion and appointed as *Sadr Amin* at Bijnor. While Sir Syed was posted here at Bijnor, the Revolt of 1857 broke out which had shaken the British. Here at Bijnor, Sir Syed had played an active role in saving the lives of several British officers. In this Revolt Sir Syed's family too suffered loss of some family members and was able to take his mother and aunt to safety in Merrut with great difficulty.

Sir Syed, having seen the Revolt and subsequently its brutal suppression by the British, was convinced that the British were too powerful and any attempt to resist them might not be fruitful at all. From this time onwards, the British started suspecting the Muslims at large as they were violently opposed to them (British). As a consequence of such an approach, the Muslims were treated more harshly than any other social group involved in the Revolt. The prospects looked bleak as regards the collective lives of the Muslims in India, and Sir Syed took it upon himself to bring about reconciliation between the Muslims and the British. In the

immediate aftermath of the Revolt, Sir Syed wrote several pamphlets (Booklets) on various issues concerning the Revolt. The first was, *Tarikh-i-Sarkashiye* Bijnor, with a narrative of the developments as regards the Revolt. However more important was his *Asbab-i-Baghawat-i-Hind* published in 1858, in which he tried to explain various underlying causes of the Revolt. However, his central argument was that the Revolt came about because the British were entirely unaware of the Indian opinion since Indians were deliberately kept out of the governance of their country. He argued, as if addressing the government of the day, that, "It is from voice of the people that the government can learn whether its projects are likely to be well received. This security can never be acquired unless the people are allowed a share in the consultation of government." It is difficult to establish any co-relation but the fact remains that within a short time, Indians were to be incorporated in the Governor-General's Council as per the provisions of the Indian Council Act of 1861.

After having convinced the British that it would serve their interests to take Indian opinion too in the governance of India, he wrote another pamphlet, *The Loyal Mohammedans of India* in 1860, in which he argued that it was not true that all the Muslims were the enemy of the British as enumerated, that there were several Muslims who had stood by the British during the tumultuous days of the Revolt. From this time onwards, Sir Syed devoted his entire life to bring about reconciliation between the British and the Muslims. However it was clear to him that his attempts at reconciliation would not bear fruits unless the Muslims' attitude towards many modern institutions such as modern education including science etc, undergo some transformation.

8.2.1 Contribution to Modern Education

Sir Syed was, by now, convinced that in order to stem the declining fortunes of the Muslims, it was important that they took to modern education as it was introduced by the British. With this purpose in mind, he founded the Scientific Society in 1863 at Ghazipur, in Uttar Pradesh. The basic objective was to translate scientific literature, into Urdu. In this project, he was supported by all including several Hindu friends, The subjects such as mechanics, electricity, pneumatics and natural philosophy received particular emphasis. Subsequently, this society was shifted to Aligarh. In 1866, Sir Syed started a journal on behalf of the Society called the Indian Institute Gazette. During 1869-70, he travelled to England and was able to observe the British educational institutions and was impressed by them. Upon his return from this extended journey he developed an idea that in order to improve educational standards of the Muslims of India, there must be modern educational institutions for them. This was the larger objective in mind with which he founded Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental (MAO) College in 1875/ 1877. It was proposed that here, while modern education would be imparted to the Muslims, they would also have some training in the preservation of their cultural heritage. It is interesting to note that while MAO College was founded for Muslims, its doors were open to all. Many graduates in the early years of this college were Hindus. He also wanted the Indian Muslims to bring about reforms in their society with the help of a magazine called *Tahzib-ul Akhlaq*, in which he ridiculed many practices which were out of tune with modern trends of the time. For all his efforts to reconcile the Muslims with the British, modern education, his advocacy for fresh interpretation of the *Quran* and keeping the door of the MAO College open to all, he was fiercely attacked by the conservative Muslims. He remained undaunted in his endeavour.

8.2.2 Hindu-Muslim Unity

Sir Syed was also a champion of the Hindu-Muslim unity. He had once described the Hindus and Muslims as two beautiful eyes of a beautiful bride. He wrote two essays in *Tahzib-ul-Akhlaq*, one in 1888 and another 1898 exhorting Muslims to give up killing of cows since this would bring about a good neighbourly relations between the Hindus and the Muslims. There were innumerable occasions when he strongly advocated for this unity between the two important religious communities.

While these were some aspects of the various thoughts of Sir Syed where he was committed to larger well being of the Muslims, there were certain other aspects as well where he seemed to suggest distinct political options for the Muslims and did not wish them ever to come closer to the Congress. Some of these tendencies were visible from the time the movement to replace Urdu in Persian script with that of Hindi in Nagari script had emerged in the United Provinces in 1867. The protagonist of this movement had argued that Urdu was not the language of the masses as Hindi was, and thus, such a demand was raised. Sir Syed was disturbed by such a development since he was himself given to use Urdu extensively in producing all kinds of literature and treatises. This sudden development on the language and script question led him to argue that, "Now I am convinced that these two nations will not work unitedly in any cause. At present there is no hostility between them. But, on account of the so called educated people it will increase a hundred fold in the future." Later, in a letter dated 29th April 1870 to Nawab Mohsinul Mulk he wrote, "This is proposal which will make Hindu-Muslim unity impossible to achieve. Muslims will never agree to Hindi and if the Hindus, in accordance with their latest attitude, insist on I-Hindi, they will reject Urdu. The inevitable consequence of such a move will be that the two will be permanently separated."

In the political realm too, Sir Syed did not have any conception of bringing religious communities together for certain political action. On the contrary he maintained that these communities would have distinct political options separate from each other. This was the driving force which made him argue that the Indian National Congress was not in the best interest of the community of Muslims. He thought the Congress was likely to take a confrontationist stance in due course of time, which would be injurious to the interest of the Muslims since they had already suffered as a consequence of the Revolt of 1857. He further thought that a mere passing of resolutions by the Congress did not make it national in character. In general he argued with Muslims that they should keep away from the Congress. Sir Syed was also opposed to the principle of election even for the local boards and district boards. He argued that keeping in view the kinds of social differences that existed in the Indian society, it would be imprudent to introduce the principle of elections. He suffered from a strange fear that, in the event of elections, various religious communities would vote for leaders of the respective communities which would result in the political marginalisation of the Muslims. Instead he favoured the principle of nomination, which would ensure certain representation of Muslims too. In making these arguments, Sir Syed betrayed certain elite bias. He himself was nominated to the Imperial Legislative Council in 1878.

It is another matter altogether that there were not many among Muslims who paid heed to his exhortations. For instance, Badruddin Tayabji refuted Sir Syed's argument and said that Muslims' interest would be better served by advancing the general progress of India. There were scores of Muslim delegates participating in the proceedings of the Indian National

Congress since 1887 and many of them came from the same province 'as Sir Syed's. The Ulema of Darul Uloom at Deoband were issuing Fatwas exhorting Muslims to join the Congress.

It is important to remember that in a country such as India where diversity of all hues existed for such a long time, religious communities were no exception. Every community threw up diverse options keeping in mind the class, linguistic, regional and other backgrounds in mind. After all Sir Syed was not preaching any hatred between communities. However his major concerns were to promote the interests of the Muslims at large particularly the established groups. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan died on 27th March 1898.

8.3 MOHAMMAD IQBAL (1876-1938)

Mohammad Iqbal is commonly referred to as Allama Iqbal for the reason that he was considered as one of the important intellectuals among the Muslims in the first half of the twentieth century. Even though he is widely known for his Urdu and Persian poetry, he was a practitioner of the politics as well. Between his poetry and politics, he was able to blend elements of philosophy as well, in which he had received training in Germany in the beginning of the twentieth century. He started his career as a poet rather early in life who, later on, acquired immense maturity. He is one of the few Urdu poets whose compositions required prior initiation for better comprehension. However, in this section, we shall concern ourselves more with his social, cultural and political world view than his poetry.

8.3.1 Early Life

Mohaminad Iqbal was born on 22nd February 1873 at Sialkot, in Punjab. His forefathers were Kashmiri Brahmins who had embraced Islam about three hundred years ago. Mohammad Iqbal looked at his ancestry with pride and gave enough reflection to it in his poetry as well. His initial education was in a traditional Maktab. Later he joined Sialkot Mission School and upon completing matriculation, he went to Lahore for higher studies and joined the Government College there and completed his B.A. in 1897. Two years later, he secured his Masters' degree and was appointed as a lecturer in the Oriental College, Lahore to teach History, Philosophy and English where he served between 1899 and 1905. He went to Europe and secured a Ph.D at Munich and returned to Lahore in 1908. In the course of his stay in Europe, he also obtained degree to practice as a barrister.

8.3.2 Ideas on Nationalism

Before Mohammad Iqbal had visited Europe he was given to espouse a rather strong sense of patriotism. For instance his famous song *Sare Jahan se Achcha Hindustan Hamara* was the ultimate tribute to the motherland, India. His poem, *Naya Shivala* too was an example of sincere exhortations to his countrymen to give up petty mindedness and develop broader vision and perspective about the corporate life as Indians. However, upon his return from Europe he seemed to develop some distaste for nationalism because of the way various European nations were pursuing this. The period he was in Europe was truly an age of aggressive nationalism. Nations were attempting to run down each other. Such observations of Iqbal led him to believe that nationalism was too narrow an ideology to make an ideal of

human and territorial groups. However, the point that must be noted here is that nationalism in a colonial society such as India was not directed towards dominating any other nation but seek liberation from colonial rule and exploitation at the hands of the British. The Indian nationalism, as it was unfolding in the course of its evolution, was more progressive than jingoistic.

8.3.3 Political Activities

While Iqbal had his one step firmly rooted in poetry and philosophy, his second step gradually started setting into the world of politics as well. He had become familiar with the Muslim League propagation of the demand for separate electorates while he was still in England in 1906. After his return to India in 1908, he joined the provincial Muslim League in Punjab. From this time onwards, Iqbal's concerns remained only with the promotion of the Muslims' interests. In order to engage himself in this exercise, he argued with Muslims that there was no point in opposing the British. He disagreed with many Muslim individuals and groups who were active in the freedom struggle and accused them of harbouring too much of the Western ideas which he thought the nationalism were. In 1909, he argued that for Muslims, the basis for nationhood was Islam itself, since nationality for Muslims was not based on material and concrete notion of such a country in terms of certain physical embodiments. Iqbal argued that in Islam the essence was 'non-temporal' and 'non-spatial' and could not be bound by character and features of a particular social group alone. The question of nationality in Islam was based on abstraction and potentially expansive groups. The values of collective life for the Muslims were based on firm grasp of the principles of Islam. Iqbal believed that Islam was a potent source to challenge the 'race-idea', which had proved to be the hardest barrier in actualising the humanitarian ideal; therefore, the Muslims must reject it. He asserted that Islam was non-territorial and believed in encompassing the entire humanity, thus rejected the limited and narrower boundaries. He asserted that the 'idea of nation' as some kind of principle of human society was in direct clash with Islam since it believed in the principle of human society. In the course of articulation of his political philosophy, he disagreed with those who believed that religion could coexist with political nationalism. He asserted that in a country such as India where different faiths existed, making the land or geographical territory as the basis of nationhood would, in the long run, result in undermining the religion itself because in the event of such a development, Islam will be reduced to mere 'ethical ideal', without its accompanying 'social order'.

Iqbal was elected to the Punjab Legislative Assembly in 1927 and actively participated in the debates of the Assembly. While participating in the Budget discussion on 5th March 1927, he pleaded for more allocation for rural sanitation and medical relief for women. In the course of the proceedings of the House, he also pleaded for more funds for mass education, which he thought was absolutely essential in the interest of the people. However, at the same time, Iqbal was keen that Muslims should develop their own educational institutions without which their history and cultural achievements would be overshadowed. On various occasions in the Assembly debates, he kept on emphasising that to talk about united nationalism was a futile exercise since all the communities were more concerned about their exclusive interests rather than the 'national' interests. All through he never allowed his focus shift away from this position.

In the wake of the communal riots in Punjab in 1927, he pleaded for harmony among the

communities. While Iqbal was a member of the Punjab Legislative Assembly he was elected the Secretary of the All India Muslim League. But he soon ran into differences with many leaders of the League on the issue of the boycott of the Simon Commission, which was an all white commission for making suggestions to bring about constitutional changes in the existing Government of India Act 1919. He left the Secretaryship of the League but continued to remain loyal to the ideology and larger principles of the party. Later in 1930 he was invited to preside over the session of the Muslim League at Allahabad. In this session he delivered a speech which was to have delineated certain options which hitherto was not envisaged by anybody else. He argued, "To base a constitution on the conception of a homogeneous India, or apply to India principles dictated by British democratic sentiments is unwittingly to prepare her for a civil war.... The formation of a consolidated North-West Muslim Indian states appears to be the final destiny of Muslims, at least of North-West India.... I therefore demand the formation of a consolidated Muslim state in the best interest of India and Islam." This statement of Mohamtnad Iqbal in a way contradicted much of what he was saying since the beginning of 1909 that Islam and many of its principles could not be kept confined to any geographical limits since they were expansive in nature. But his new set of ideas was to become an ideological reference point for the League in times to come.

However, it has to be noted that Iqbal did not maintain consistency in his formulations on the question of nationalism. In March 1933 he remarked that nationalism implied certain race consciousness which was against the grain of his conviction. He argued that if such a consciousness was allowed to take place in the Asian context, it was recipe for some kind of disaster. Again in 1938 he argued that it was not the national unity but human brotherhood alone was the unifying force for the mankind since such a thing would be above the considerations of race, colour, language and nationality. He believed that in order to achieve higher goals of humanity, it was important to blur these distinctions. He reiterated the same principles in his response to Husain Ahmad Madani's argument for territorial nationalism encompassing all religious communities of India. While Iqbal was arguing for a universal brotherhood, according to him, it was to be based on his conviction that it was Islam alone which would provide such a ground. It is not difficult to discern therefore, certain contradictions in his world-view of universal brotherhood based only on Islam, thus leaving out all other philosophy for similar options. Another glaring contradiction that we can notice is that his universalism was tampered with an argument for the Muslims maintaining their separate identity in a clearly demarcated geographical area.

Iqbal's participation in the contemporary political process was full of contradiction and inconsistencies. However his contributions in the realm of poetic creativity were far more enduring. He breathed his last on 21st April 1938.

8.4 MWULANA MAUDUDI (1903-1979)

Syed Abul A'la Maududi popularly known as Maulana Maududi, is one of the greatest revivalists of Islam in the 20th century. Apart from having produced a large number of literature concerning Islam and Muslims, he was the founder of the Jamat-i-Islami in 1941. Maulana Maududi was born on 2nd September 1903 in a devout Muslim family of Aurangabad, in the present day Maharashtra. His educational training was steeped in Islamic studies right from the beginning. Towards the close of the second decade of the twentieth century he was

drawn to the nationalist movement in the wake of the Non-cooperation-Khilafat movement and was impressed by Gandhiji's work so much that he wrote a book on his personality and work but it was confiscated by the British Government. After a brief stint with a paper called *Taj* at Jabalpur, he came in contact with *Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind* a body of Muslim theologians committed to the cause of Indian's struggle for independence, which was founded towards the end of 1919. He became the editor of the paper launched by it called *the Muslim* and served it till the end of 1923 when this paper was closed. Subsequently the *Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind* launched another paper called *al-Jamiat* which Maulana Maududi again joined it as the editor and continued to serve the paper till the end of 1927.

The time Maulana Maududi broke his links with the *Jamiat*, he launched himself as an independent Islamic thinker with the Publication of *al-Jihad fil-Islam* in 1927, which he had written to address many issues which had arisen as a consequence of the assassination of Swami Shirdhanand and went into some length to argue that not all acts of aggression, a Muslim deserves to describe as Jihad. This book was considerably noticed in religious and political circles. However Maulana Maududi did not have any defined pursuit of career. He came to much wider prominence with the editorship of *Tarjuman-ul-Quran* at Hyderabad since 1936. His writings attracted even Mohammad Iqbal, who invited him to Pathankot and pursue his studies there. He offered the support of some Wakf property there. He moved to Pathankot in January 1938 to establish Darul Islam Academy. However the death of Mohammad Iqbal soon after, made Maulana Maududi return to Lahore to teach Islamiyat at Islamia College there.

8.4.1 Views on Nationalism

There appears some shift in Maulana Maududi's world-view as regards the Muslims being a part of the territorial nationalism or distinct from it. We have already discussed the point that in the early years Maulana Maududi strongly believed in the composite territorial nationalism but from this time onwards he seemed to have undergone ideological transformation. He started arguing that Islamic 'nationhood' was more rational than the territorial nationalism. It had the capacity to absorb all, therefore capable of absorbing all and lay the foundation of cultural unity. He argued that Islamic 'nationhood' could not coexist with other 'nationalities' of race, language and country. He asserted that Muslims must sever all links with the land of birth. In Maududi's perception, Islamic and geographical nationalism were two mutually exclusive entities, therefore he was apprehensive that geographical nationalism among Muslims would undermine Islamic 'nationhood' and unity. He thought that Indian leaders were mistaken in their belief that in order to fight the British, they must create a common nationality. He disagreed with Husain Ahmad Madani's contention that in the Indian context a religious community did not constitute a nation unto itself. On the contrary, all religious communities must politically merge together in order to emerge as a distinct nation on territorial basis. However while Husain Ahmad Madani was making these arguments on behalf of the *Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind*, he was also conscious of the fact that while Muslims were willing to join the process of the making of a nation, they must retain their distinct religio-cultural identity. Maududi's notion of Islamic 'nationality' reached an incomprehensible length when he argued that all those who were struggling against the British should be aware that if the British were to transfer power to non-Muslims then the very participation of a Muslim in this process would not be valid from the point of view of religion. He further argued that if the Muslims

truly want to fight for the freedom from the British then they should have one clear objective in mind that they would strive to make India *dar-al Islam* where it would be possible for Muslims to organise their life according to the principles of Islam. Around 1937-38 Maulana Maududi proposed some kind of state within a state where the Muslims would enjoy freedom to organise their life according to the Sharia and preserve their 'national life'.

Maulana Maududi's conception of the Muslims constituting some kind of transcendental nation was so strong that he neither endorsed the Congress' approach to bring the whole of India under popular sovereignty of all its people, nor did he endorse the Muslim League's claim that Indian Muslims were a nation unto themselves in order to justify their demand for the partition of India and the making of Pakistan. According to Maulana Maududi, the Muslim League notion of nationalism too was self limiting. In order to propagate the religious and political philosophy of Maulana Maududi, a party was established under his leadership called the Jama't-i-Islami on 25th August 1941. At the time of founding the Jamat, a constitution was also drawn up where the emphasis was more on religious matters rather than political.

Encouraged by the criticism of the Congress too, the Muslim League thought of enlisting the support of the Maulana Maududi twice through Maulana Zafar Ahmad Ansari. He was once invited in 1937 to join the research group of the League; in 1945 again similar kind of invitation was extended to him by Maulana Ansari. On both the occasions he turned down the League's invitation. In a booklet titled as *Rah-i-Amal* published in 1944, Maulana Maududi argued that theirs (Muslims) opposition was neither to the Hindus nor the British. Their only aim and objective was establishment of the sovereignty of God. Keeping this in mind he castigated all other Muslim organisations for being obsessed with 'freedom' either from the Hindus or British imperialism. According to him, the real salvation of the Muslims was in deliverance from the rule of those other than God.

Maulana Maududi did not endorse the Muslim League's claim for Pakistan for it was not in tune with his conception of Islamic 'nation' since such a demand was based on the notion of territorial nationalism. He could not have accepted it. However when the partition became imminent, he decided to split the Jama't-i-Islami into two, one part working in Pakistan and the other in India in order to realise the goals it had set before itself at the time of its foundation. It is another matter altogether that in 1948 Maulana Maududi himself migrated to Pakistan and ran into troubles with the Pakistan Government from time to time.

8.5 MOHAMMAD ALI JINNAH (1876-1948)

Mohammad Ali Jinnah travelled long distances in his political career finally to become the Qaid-i-Azam, which literally means a great leader to the Pakistanis since he had the credit of founding Pakistan after seeking the partition of India on 14th August 1947. It was argued by the All India Muslim League and M.A.Jinnah in March 1940 that Indian Muslims were not only just a religious community seeking certain constitutional arrangements which would ensure better and secure future of the Muslims of India, but also make it a distinct nation. Once such a declaration was made, the next logical step was to demand a state in the name of Pakistan. The man who carried this demand to its fruition was the one and only M.A.Jinnah.

Mohammad Ali Jinnah was born on 25th December 1876 in the family of a relatively prosperous

business family of Jinnabhai in Karachi. After his initial education in Karachi and Bombay, Jinnah went to England to study law which he soon completed at the age of eighteen years with two more years of stay there at Lincoln Inn's formal training. At the age of twenty he returned to India to join the Bar first in Karachi and later in Bombay and soon established himself among the legal fraternity of the city.

Jinnah became a part of the Congress led politics by joining the party in 1906. At the annual session of the Congress, the same year, he acted as the private secretary to Dadabhai Nauroji who was the president of the Indian National Congress for that year. Around this time he was largely given to a liberal world-view and strongly believed in the constitutional process. He came quite close to a moderate Congress leader, Gopal Krishna Gokhale and received his initial political training under him and soon earned recognition. He was a part of the battery of lawyers who defended Lokmanya Tilak in 1908 when he was prosecuted by the British. In 1909 he was elected to the Imperial Legislative Council from Bombay and excelled in his performance in defending several issues which affected the lives of Indians including the struggle which was going on in South Africa under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. He spoke about the harsh treatment meted out to the Indians there. Jinnah supported Gokhale in 1912 when he came up with the Elementary Education Bill and argued for more allocation of money for the purpose. While Jinnah was still in the Congress, he joined the Muslim League as well on the suggestion of Maulana Mohammad Ali and Wazir Husain in 1913. However before joining the League, he ensured that joining it never meant any compromise on the larger national cause as espoused by the Congress. The same year he was instrumental in accepting the Wakf Validating Bill by the then Viceroy, which was meant to safeguard the interests of the beneficiaries of the Muslim family trusts against the folly of any one member of the family. This particular act of Jinnah earned him recognition among the Muslims.

8.5.1 Hindu-Muslim Unity

Just like Syed Ahmad Khan, Jinnah was also keen to work for the well being of the Muslims. However, his concern for the Muslims was not meant to be at the cost of the Hindu-Muslim unity. As a matter of fact it is important to note that till the elections of 1937 he believed that both the communities must join hands to remain strong in order to overcome the difficulties placed on the Indians by the British Government. Some reflection in this regard was manifest at the time of the Lucknow Pact of 1916 which envisaged certain seat sharing formula between the Hindus and Muslims, in which the Muslims gained better advantages in Muslim minority provinces such as United Provinces while they had conceded more ground to the Hindus and others in the Muslim majority provinces such as the Punjab and Bengal. Important national leaders played a crucial role in this like Tilak. Jinnah too played an important role in bringing about this agreement.

Jinnah was one of the many leaders who did not approve of mixing religion with politics. In the context of the emerging Non-cooperation-khilafat movement, he did not approve of religion being pressed in the service of politics. He was sounding certain note of caution that the consequences of such a strategy might prove to be counterproductive. During 1919-1920, strong religious feelings were stirred among the Muslims on the issue of Khilafat, an Islamic institution in the hands of the Ottomans of Turkey for considerably long time. However after the defeat of Turkey in the First World War, it was feared by Muslims that soon Ottoman

Empire would be fragmented and many Holy places would fall in the hands of the non-Muslims, which was unacceptable to them. In any case, for quite sometime, anti-Islamic upsurge had already generated anti-colonial sentiments among the Muslims. Keeping all these developments in mind, Gandhiji decided to go along with the Muslims and agreed to lead the movement. His understanding was that he, as a good Hindu, was duty-bound to stand by his Muslim compatriots in times of their distress. In the context of all these developments, the Indian National Congress, despite its initial reluctance, finally decided to extend support to Gandhiji; this was the movement with which Jinnah did not agree at all and resigned from the Congress in 1920 not to come back to it ever again.

8.5.2 Jinnah and the Muslim League

It must be pointed out that while Jinnah left the Congress, he retained his association with the Muslim League. However, after leaving the Congress, he remained politically dormant but sprung to action once again when it was announced that an all-white Simon Commission would visit India to study the working of the Government of India Act 1919 and make recommendations for bringing about changes in it. All shades of political opinion barring some, decided to boycott the Commission. At this point of time the Muslim League was split into two wings – one led by Mohammad Shafi of the Punjab and the other by M.A. Jinnah. The Shafi wing of the League agreed to cooperate with the Commission whereas the Jinnah faction decided to go along with the Congress in boycotting it. In view of these developments, it was resolved that instead of cooperating with the Commission, Indians would work out their own constitution acceptable to all. In the context of this resolve that Indians would work out their own constitution, various groups activated themselves to come up with proposals which might be given some consideration while preparing the constitution. Many prominent Muslim leaders met in Delhi on 20th March 1927 under the presidentship of Mohammad Ali Jinnah to discuss Muslim representation in the legislature and after long deliberation came up with certain proposals which are popularly known as the Delhi Declaration. It was for the first time that many Muslim leaders had agreed to give up separate electorates, which was considered a stumbling block in bringing the two important communities together. The Declaration said that giving up separate electorates should be conditioned upon the following: (1) Sind to be separated from the Bombay Presidency and made a separate province (2) reforms to be introduced in the North-West Frontier Provinces and Baluchistan on the same footing as any other province in India (3) in Bengal and Punjab proportion of representation to be made in accordance with the size of population (4) in the Central Legislature, Muslim representation to be not less than one-third, It was said that after these demands were accepted, Muslims would accept joint electorates in all the provinces so constituted and make to Hindu minorities in Bengal, Punjab and North-West Frontier Province similar concessions that the Hindu majorities in other provinces were prepared to make to the Muslims.

The Madras session of the Congress held in December 1927 broadly accepted the suggestion made in the Delhi Declaration and gave assurances to Muslims that their legitimate interests would be secured by reservation of seats in the joint electorates on the basis of population in every province and in the Central Legislature. It had also agreed to other proposals regarding Sind, N.W.F.P. and Baluchistan. In order to work out a constitution, an All Parties Conference was constituted which, in turn, constituted a Drafting Committee under the chairmanship of Motilal Nehru. In the course of deliberations and consultations with all

concerned parties, it came to the fore that despite the Congress approval of the Delhi Declaration, the Hindu Mahasabha was not willing to concede demands raised by various shades of Muslim opinion. As a result, in the final Report which is popularly known as the Nehru Report, these issues were ignored thus causing disappointment to many Muslim groups. However in order to get the final approval of the said Report, an All Parties Conference was convened in Calcutta in December 1928. In this meeting Jinnah made a fervent plea with members present there that for the sake of unity among the communities particularly the Hindus and Muslims, "It is absolutely essential to our progress that Hindu Muslim settlement should be reached, and that all communities should live in friendly and harmonious spirit in this vast country of ours." He further added by way of caution, "Majorities are apt to be oppressive and tyrannical and minorities always dread and fear that their interests and rights, unless clearly defined and safe-guarded by statutory provisions, would suffer.." Jinnah was shouted down in this All Parties Conference. With disappointment Jinnah came back to Bombay and soon after left for England with an intention to settle down there practicing law.

This episode was a turning point in the political life of Jinnah. Determined to stay in England but on the persuasion of Liaqat Ali Khan, the future first Prime Minister of Pakistan, Jinnah decided to return to India in 1934. Soon he was elected as the permanent President of the All India Muslim League. He worked hard to expand the social base of the League. There was one opportunity to test the electoral strength of the League in the context of 1937 elections, which was held under the provisions of the Government of India Act 1935. The said Act was severely criticised by all, including Jinnah. Yet many, including the Congress, thought of using this opportunity to test their respective strengths. The Muslim League could secure only 109 out of total 482 Muslim seats in all British Indian provinces. It was nowhere close to forming the majority in Muslim majority provinces. It turned out to be a sad commentary on the League's performance in the 1937 elections. Combined with such dismal performance, it (League) was alarmed by the Muslim Mass Contact Programme of the Congress and feared that such a programme would undermine its claim to represent Muslims. Coupled with this, there were also two unsuccessful attempts to form coalition Ministries in Bombay Presidency and United Provinces. The Muslim League adopted an aggressive attitude towards the Congress and the Congress-led ministries in various provinces. It charged them of pursuing anti-Muslim policies and started describing the Congress as caste-Hindu party instead of national party.

8.5.3 Two Nation Theory

In its opposition to the Congress, the Muslim League crossed all limits and finally came around to the idea of describing the Muslims of India not as a religious community or a minority in a Hindu-majority country but a distinct nation. Thus according to the League's formulations, India was home to not one but two nations which led the demand that India be partitioned so that there could be separate homeland to the Muslims as well. This understanding was put to crystallisation in the annual session of the Muslim League held in Lahore on 23rd March 1940. The Resolution adopted here is popularly known as the Pakistan Resolution or 'Two-nation theory'. In this resolution it was said that the Muslims of India on account of their religious, cultural and historical distinctiveness in contrast with the Hindus, constituted a nation unto themselves. Since then, Jinnah reiterated this position on all occasions and from all platforms. From this time onwards, the Muslim League, under Jinnah, did not look back

and never considered any settlement **which** was **not conceding** Pakistan. In this effort, **of the** League, the British Government was more than obliging right **since** the time **of August Offer of 1940** and right through the Cripps Mission of **1942** and the Cabinet Mission **of 1946**. In the **Simla** Conference held in 1945, Jinnah had **argued** that **in** the event of any interim arrangements of ministry formation, only the Muslim League would have the right to nominate Muslim members. In an unsaid manner, Lord Wavel, the then Viceroy, **conceded** this **demand** raised by the Muslim League. As a consequence many Muslim political leaders in provinces such as **Punjab** switched sides in favour of the League and in the elections **of 1945-46** it was able to secure almost 75% of the Muslim votes. However it is important to mention that these elections were held under the provisions of the Government of India Act 1935 and the average franchised percentage did not exceed more than 15% of the **total** population, Muslims being no exception to it.

It is pertinent to recall that there was opposition to **Jinnah's** formulations of Muslims constituting a nation from within the Muslims, apart from the Congress and others. For instance within one month of the passing of the 'two-nation theory', various Muslim political formations from different parts of the country and representing different sections but **firmly** committed to the cause of Indian nationalism, came to form a coalition called Azad **Muslim** Conference. In April **1940** a huge convention was organised in Delhi where 'Two-nation theory' was challenged. It was argued that while **Muslims** were a distinct religious community with their cultural world-view, they did not constitute a nation as claimed by **Jinnah** and the Muslim League. In several places the League had to face electoral challenge from the **constituent** of this Azad Muslim conference. For instance in **Bihar** six Muslim League candidates were defeated in the provincial elections in 1946 by the candidates of All India **Momin** Conference, a body of Muslim weavers. Jamaat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind, a body of Muslim theologians, too kept on challenging the League for its demand for partition. It vehemently argued that Muslims were not a nation but a religious community and it was an integral part of the single territorial nationhood along with the rest of the people of India.

8.6 SUMMARY

In the **preceding** pages we have discussed the emergence and evolution of the **Muslim** thought only with reference to four persons. In all cases we have noticed that these thoughts were fixed entities since they were continuously evolving in the context of certain historical developments. In many cases some thoughts of these men became irrelevant while in others they persisted. However it is important to underline that Sir Syed was **more** concerned about securing the future of Muslims through modern education and reconciliation with the British. In case of Mohammad Iqbal and Maulana Maududi, we find that they were more concerned with the theological aspects of Muslims' life. They both treated nationalism outside the **pale** of Islamic principles of life. But Mohammad Ali Jinnah essentially focused on the political dimensions of the collective life of the Muslims. He started well in tune with Indian nationalism but in due course of time adopted a belligerent attitude and called **Muslims** a nation, therefore justifying the demand for partition of India and the making of Pakistan.

It is important to bear in mind that while these four were important figures who attempted to influence the thought process and **political developments**, there were many others in their contemporary times who held diametrically opposite view to all these. At the same time, let

us bear in mind that since the Muslims were not a homogeneous community, no single individual or formation could ever make a legitimate claim to represent the entire community in the realms of thoughts and politics. We have to take into account diverse voices emanating from equally diverse society such as India's without any exception.

8.7 EXERCISES

1. Analyse Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's views on Hindu-Muslim Unity.
2. Summarise Mohammad Iqbal's ideas on Nationalism and his contribution to the Muslim Thought.
3. The Islamic nationhood and geographical nationalism, as Maulana Maududi argued, are two distinct identities. Explain.
4. Briefly analyse M.A. Jinnah's contribution to the 'Two Nation Theory'.