

### ***Book Review***

**S.M. Burke and Salim Al-Din Quraishi, *Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, his personality and his politics*, Karachi, Oxford University Press pp 412 Rs. 495/-.**

**A convincing vindication of the Quaid's Conversion from Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity to founding father of Pakistan.**

A book which most Pakistanis have been waiting for for the past five years or so, has at last been published by The Oxford University Press, Karachi (1997) as part of their Jubilee Series. A dispassionate study of the Quaid's life and his personality illustrates that he was a luminary in three different walks of life. Firstly, as one of undivided India's renowned legal practitioners; secondly, one of its leading legislators and, thirdly, as one of its leading politicians. It is universally recognised that the Quaid attained not only world stature, but won a permanent place in world history. Through his dynamic and inspiring leadership, he not only won independence from the then British colonial rule, but had the sole distinction of altering the world map by carving into existence the largest Muslim state of its time in the comity of nations – bigger than the United Kingdom and France put together. It is the role of a leading politician which this latest publication principally deals with.

Its co-authors, Professor S.M. Burke and Salim Al-Din Quraishi have already individually and jointly published a series of acclaimed standard books on various subjects including Pakistan's Foreign Policy, Mainsprings of Indian and Pakistani foreign policy, the British Raj in India, Akbar, The Greatest Mogul and Bahadur Shah, The Last Mogul Emperor of India.

The book under review comprises twelve chapters, which deal briefly with the following topics: evolution of Quaid's political contribution to the politics of India and Pakistan, his dealings with his contemporaries such as Mahatma Gandhi, C.R. Das, Gopal Gokhale, Naoroji Dadabhai, Sir Agha Khan, Sir Muhammad Iqbal, Pandit Nehru etc. – the people with whom he reckoned with and who influenced him most. The preliminary chapters deal with his personal life, his education, his marriages, his character, political style, and his establishment as a prominent barrister in Bombay. In the following chapters, the authors have compared his rise in Indian politics both as a member of the Indian National Congress and later as a member and President of the All-India Muslim League.

The basic argument given in the book is that while Muslims always wanted to live and co-operate with the majority community (Hindus) as one

nation, their bitter experiences made them realise that such co-existence was not only the most difficult proposition, but was well nigh impossible. The Hindu majority was extremely unwilling at any cost to give their Muslim compatriots any kind of assurance or guarantee for co-existence in terms of constitutional safeguards. This happened earlier with Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Dr. Mohammad Iqbal and a number of other Muslim leaders. In spite of this background, the Quaid continued his efforts towards Hindu-Muslim unity till 1937 thinking the congressites may have been willing to concede some assurances or concessions to the Muslims. This proved illusory as all his top-tail efforts failed one after the other. Ultimately, the Quaid was convinced that the best way to safeguard the interests of the Muslims of India was to create an independent or semi-independent state for Muslims, particularly in the regions where they were in a majority. No doubt, for this Jinnah had to face tremendous difficulties and problems with Indian national leaders as well as from the British who wanted to leave a united India as their crowning achievement. The thesis of the book is thus the story of the creation of Pakistan as well as the political and personal life of Jinnah.

Most Pakistanis have been nurtured by Indian and British writers on the idea that Jinnah introduced religion into politics and entirely frustrated Gandhi's efforts to create a harmonious, strong and secular India. By tracing the political history of India since 1906, the learned authors by quoting incontrovertible sources have established that Jinnah had in fact wholeheartedly played the role of ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity till the late 1930s. It was then that actual experience of Congress ministries in the provinces convinced him that the permanent Hindu majority in a united India was bound to oppress the Muslim minority for all time to come.

Quoting from the autobiography of M.C. Chagla, the authors on the contrary, have beyond doubt established the fact that it was Gandhi and not Jinnah who introduced religion into politics. The alliance between Mahatma Gandhi and the Khilafatists considerably accentuated the communal and religious aspects of Indian political life, forcing Jinnah to abandon his ambassadorship of Hindu-Muslim unity and to strive for Muslim nationhood to escape from permanent Hindu majority rule and domination. The Mahatma not only introduced religion into politics, he also discarded constitutional methods to achieve self-government and resorted instead to non-cooperation with the British Government, according to the authors.

Another misunderstanding existing in many minds, which this book effectively clears up, is that the Quaid-i-Azam was too westernised to visualise Pakistan as an Islamic State. Proponents of this view rely on a statement made by the Quaid in his presidential address to the Pakistan Constituent Assembly on 11th August 1947. By quoting at length the

statements of the Quaid over the years, the authors have demonstrated that he stood for generous treatment of the minorities as an Islamic injunction, rather than a secular virtue. In reply to Mountbatten's statement regarding transfer of power to Pakistan, only three days after the 11th August 1947 statement, the Quaid was reported to have said that our Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) not only by words, but by deeds treated the Jews and Christians, after he had conquered them with utmost tolerance, regard and consideration for their faiths and beliefs. Further, in an address to the Bar Association of Karachi on 25 January 1948, Governor-General Jinnah regretted that a section of the people deliberately wanted to create mischief and false propaganda that the Constitution of Pakistan could not be made on the basis of the Shariat Islam, which he said, was the most modern religion and 'Islamic principles' are as applicable to life today as they were 1,300 years ago.

This lucid and authoritative book effectively dispels the mist of misinformation that had for too long obscured the real causes that led to the Quaid-i-Azam's change of heart. The book is intensively researched and adequately documented. No student of South-Asian affairs can afford to bypass it. It must be made compulsory reading for every student of history, politics and Pakistan studies in schools, colleges and universities. It is hard bound, printed and published well and is almost free from printer's errors and mistakes. The present writer had the unique opportunity of proof reading some of the chapters at the earlier stage of its production.

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