# Jam'iyyat Ulama-i Hind in politics: A sociohistorical survey (1919-1945)

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### **Abstract**

Jam'iyyat 'Ulama-i Hind (JUH) (est. 1919 C.E.) originated from the pan-Islamic Khilafat Movement at a time when Muslims as minority were presented with the idea of coexisting with the majority non-Muslim 'others' (herein the Hindus) in an unprecedented political set-up of a nation-state. Given the diverse cultural and ethnic environment of the sub-continent, Muslims had come to inherit almost the same sensibilities and vulnerabilities as their non-Muslim counterparts. However, while the nationalistic approach of the majority Indians aimed at gaining complete independence from the British colonial power, the problem in essence for the Muslim religious elites was to legitimize this independence from the framework of Islam as a religion as well as political theology which could survive secular politics in the modern world. In all its complexity, Indian Muslims were certainly divided in developing their stance around such political existence and which came to reflect in at least three different organizations with significant Muslim representation namely, the Indian National Congress (est. 1885), the All-India Muslim League (est. 1906) and JUH, the alternative and local face of the pan-Islamic Khilafat Movement (est. 1919). This paper will examine the three in their respective socio-historical place with the focus on JUH as primarily the organization of Muslim scholars, the 'Ulama. In particular, the idea of composite nationalism as proposed by JUH shall be analysed in reference to the two-nation theory of AIML and nationalism of INC. While doing so, the paper will provide a survey of the political field of the JUH before Partition in 1947 C.E. and point out its significance in the larger canvas of the Indian Muslim politics till date.

**Keywords:** Muslim revivalist movements, composite nationalism, twonation theory, Indian 'Ulama, Muslim minority, Hindu-Muslim coexistence, British India

## **Muslims in British India**

The Indian Sub-continent has, since the beginning, harboured multiple cultural and religious sentiments given to its dense socio-cultural context. Even before the Muslims, Indian history is long known for cultural assimilation wherein the foreigners, (for example, the Aryans) and the aborigines of India coexisted and hence, brought forth a generation of multiple ethnicities who developed varied social practices and a spectrum of cultural heritage. There were multiple factors which attracted such cultural reciprocities, most important of which perhaps were its reasonable economic produce and accommodative non-violent civil structure (the latter being predominantly derived from Hindu-Vedic philosophy). In contrast to the Europeans especially in the West where Church ruled supreme at the behest of Christianity as an organized and dominant religion and where economy was rendered weak and vulnerable, India typically symbolized the 'Orient', an outlandish place of those who dwelled in an altogether a different historical setting. Colonizing Indian public space thus would certainly have laid bare a plethora of unprecedented socio-political experiences as has been historically declared evident.

In this process of colonization thus, British as social actors should be understood in the context of their own radical transformation: one that emerged through drastic polarization between state and religion, a secular infusion through what we understand today as Industrial Capitalism<sup>1</sup>- a process which is often considered a tool of modernization. While it is true that British industrialized and hence modernized India under their rule, the assumption should not be made overlooking the fact that Indian economy not only deteriorated during the British colonial era but there also emerged a surge of anti-British sentiments among its inhabitants in the developing socio-political atmosphere. This is starkly different from the way Britain progressed in the wake of industrial capitalism; for their economy soared and strengthened, often at the expense of their colonial subjects.<sup>2</sup>

The war of Independence (or Mutiny) in 1857, is an open secret that blatantly tells the unanimous stance of Hindu and Muslim pro-nationalists against the colonial subjugation. Especially the Muslims who came to utilize, however weak but nevertheless present, rule of Bahadur Shah Zafar (1775-1862), gathered under the authority of 'Ulama for their collective national interest and hence took equal part in resisting the Company's rule. However, the situation changed right after the establishment of the British Raj (1858), during which the 'Ulama are reported to have paid huge price for their nationalist uprising against the British and were termed as rebels. It can be said that the socio-political atmosphere that developed in the aftermath of 1857 revolt, thus brutally crushed the 'Ulama's military resistance against the British as a general sense of their defeat prevailed. Nevertheless, and as fantasied and charmed as it has always been, the Indian

nationalist struggle for independence from the British continued even after, both in secrecy and through visible political interferences.

### Muslim Revivalist Movements

While overall, there were Muslim political cum military uprisings, on the traditional, classical religious front of Islam, we find that Muslim scholars of the subcontinent had ever since focused on the reformation of Islamic spirit in the Muslim community. Regarding this vast spectrum of revivalist/reformative movements especially in the post-1857 period, Barbara D. Metcalf's categorization is reasonably illustrative. She has confined them under at least two main categories: Tajdīdī and Jihadī. While reflecting on the difference between the two, she writes,

"A cluster of terms describes these movements, of which two particularly recur. One is *tajdid*, which suggests the process of renewal and specifically commitment to the way of the Prophet, who is the embodiment of revelation as conveyed in Islamic Law. A second is jihad, which points to the effort or the action required in conforming to the way of God."

She further explains that all Muslim reformatory movements tend to possess at least three main characteristics: a) the participants (Muslim revolutionaries/reformative thinkers) invariably interpret the problems as religious since Islam encompasses all walks of life, b) the ultimate cause moral/social and political troubles is attributed to individuals' moral corruption, c) individual morality is sought through returning towards original teachings of Islam as represented by scriptures, and d) the movements have been led by religious leaders.<sup>4</sup>

While one can discern the overall milieu of the subcontinent in terms of Muslim renaissance from such pieces of work, yet for another recent and political account of the Muslim movements especially in the wake of British Raj (1858-1947 C.E.), we can refer to the W.C. Smith's sociological study, Modern Islam in India.<sup>5</sup> Smith provides a thorough sociological analysis of the Muslim uprising discoursing on the various factions that rose in response to the British Raj exclusively in terms of industrial and capitalistic development of the subcontinent under the British rule. Classifying the movements as i) in favour of the contemporary British, ii) in favour of the Islamic culture of the past and iii) in favour of the new culture of the future, he provides accounts of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan (1817-1898 C.E.) and Aligarh school, of Amīr 'Alī's (1849-1928 C.E.) literary contribution to the socio-political situation of the Indian society and of Muhammad Iqbal's (1877-1938 C.E.) diverse life phases namely progressive and reactionary, respectively in the larger socio-political scenario of the subcontinent under the British Raj.<sup>6</sup>

Thus, overall, we can safely interpret from the discussion above that the reformatory movements of the Muslim scholars especially in the nineteenth century British India had at least two most common purposes; to restore the Muslim rule and to restore Muslim orthodox faith. One side of the camp, however, perceived these two to be achieved through non-violent intra-religious reformation (Tajdīd), while the other turned towards resistances, political or military, to re-establish Muslim ethos (Jihad). The first side of the camp can be represented in the movements such as that represented by Ahmad Raza Khan Barelwi (1856-1921), about whose political philosophy, Sanyal writes,

Unlike some of the other Muslim reformist groups, Ahmad Riza defined religious community in cultural rather than political terms. When Indian Muslims began to engage in national politics in the early twentieth century, he advised his followers against it, arguing that the classical Islamic sources did not support political action against British rule in India, as the British had not interfered in the Muslims' internal affairs or religious institutions.<sup>7</sup>

For the other, political cum militant stance taken by the Muslim reformers, it is important to mention the name of Sayyid Ahmad of Rāi Barēlī (1786-1831) to whose figure is attributed the foundations of Muslim Jihad against the British in the subcontinent. A pupil of Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz (1746-1824 C.E.) who was known to have explicated the complex philosophy of Shāh Walī Allāh through his intellectual and literary enterprises, such as his *Tafsīr* and *Tarjumah* of the Quran and his *Fatāwā*; especially those which guided the Muslim conduct with the British imperial power, Sayvid Ahmad was introduced to the teachings and philosophy of Walī Allāh. His vision therefore coincided in principle with Walī Allāh's revivalist perspective in terms of denouncing the malpractices of Muslims that had become deep-rooted in the society over the generations. In addition, Sayyid Ahmad's call for Jihad was zealously answered by his followers because of his spiritual standing.<sup>8</sup> He, along with another influential 'Alim Shah Ismā'īl (1779-1831 C.E.), however lost their lives fighting the Sikhs (1831 C.E.) in Bālākot before they could venture against the British. The struggle nonetheless, continued. Finally, the 1857 C.E. revolt happened which apparently brought this Jihad to an end.

However, soon after we find that the so-called Muslim freedom fighters, who fought in the revolt bearing Sayyid Ahmad's Jihadist philosophy, regrouped again. The name of Hājī Imdād Allāh Muhājir Makkī (1817-1899 C.E.), originally from Nanota and a disciple of Shah Muhammad Ishaq Dehlawi (1783-1846 C.E.) emerges on the pages of history under whose leadership the battle of Shamli in Thānahbhawan (1857 C.E.) was fought against the British. Given his antecedents as a Sufi and participation in the militant struggle against the British, Imdād Allāh was soon looked upon as the saviour of the Muslim community which was left bruised in the traumatic era of post 1857 C.E revolt. However, due to unfavourable circumstances imposed by the British, he left for Hijāz but nonetheless maintained his influence and ties in the subcontinent through two of his

renowned pupils: Maulana Qāsim Nānotvī (1833-1880 C.E.) and Maulana Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī (1829-1905 C.E.), the masterminds behind the famous Deoband movement.<sup>10</sup>

#### The Deoband Movement

In the light of this brief historical survey, it may not be wrong to say that Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband (1866 C.E.), the brainchild of Maulana Nānotvī, Maulana Gangohi and others, carried the same agenda against the British but which was reinterpreted as one aimed at reviving Islamic spirit among the Indian Muslims after 1857 revolt. It became famous for having fostered perhaps the most eminent of the Muslim religious movements in the recent history of the subcontinent. However, in few of the historians' understanding, the place was also used to inculcate freedom movements among its pupils apart from its formal education. As Tariq Hassan puts it, "The objectives of establishing this madrasa were twofold – to teach Islam as upheld by Shah Waliullah and Shah Abdul Aziz and also simultaneously to revive in the students a sense of freedom which they felt was under threat because of foreign rule."

Barbara D. Metcalf, while elaborating on the inception of the Deoband *madrasah* refers to her earlier categorization and explains in the following manner:

"For most of the 'ulama the goal of their work was not to create, in any sphere available, a community both observant of detailed religious law and, to the extent possible, committed to a spiritual life as well. To do so was, in general terms, to return to the tradition of "the tongue and the pen" espoused by Shah 'Abdu'l-'Aziz. The 'ulama in Muslim history have tended to oscillate between participation in the state and the exercise of independently based local leadership. The north Indian 'ulama, in choosing the latter style, thus adopted a well-known strategy with historical precedent [...] Their pattern was soon to be set by a school founded by Rashid Ahmad, Muhammad Qasim, and others in 1867 in a town called Deoband [...]" 12

Dar-ul-'Ulum Deoband thus produced some people of high religious and political calibre like Maulana Mahmud Ḥasan (1851-1920 C.E.) and his pupils such as Maulana Shabbir Ahmad Usmani (1887-1949 C.E.) Maulana Hussain Aḥmad Madanī (1879-1957 C.E.) Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi(1862-1943 C.E.), Ubaidullah Sindhi (1872-1944 C.E.) and Mufti Kifayatullah Dehalwi (1875-1952 C.E.) among others. They became active and indulged into religio-political field of the subcontinent soon after. Not only that, some of the Deobandi scholars were also involved in architecting some major conspiracy movements against the British rule. The Silk-Letter Conspiracy/Movement (1913-1920 C.E.) was run by Maulana Mahmud Ḥasan (also known as 'Sheikh al-Hind) however which failed resulting in

his exile and imprisonment along with Hussain Aḥmad Madanī in Malta Jail for about four years. Upon their return to India in 1920, Mahmud Ḥasan presided over one of the general meetings of Jam'iyyat 'Ulama-i Hind in 1920 C.E., thus ensuring his leadership and support for its inception particularly as its president and Sheikh al-Hind.<sup>13</sup>

# Jam'iyyat 'Ulama-i Hind's inception

In 1919, that is at the end of First World war, the ulama gathered on a single platform to establish an organization whose purpose was to ensure the rights of Muslims as a community and maintain bilateral relations with other communities of India, despite the religious and political agitation. Since JUH rose as an offshoot of the Khilāfat movement whose main struggle was to protest against the British for being disloyal in terms of fulfilling their promise of preserving the Muslim Caliphate, JUH naturally reinforced the protest. However, the characteristic that made it stood apart, was its independent body of 'ulamawho made the cause of Indian freedom struggle a part of the organization's agenda as much as it was the part of INC and the AIML. The first founding members of JUH in the Khilāfat committee (Delhi, November 1919) included, apart from others, some major Deobandi scholars such as Muhammad Kifāyat Allah and Maulana Hāfiz Ahmad Sa'īd Dehlvī who nonetheless held key positions in the file and ranks of the organization.

# **Objectives**

JUH's objectives bore both nationalist and pan-Islamic underlying philosophies. While its nationalism seemed to define the struggle of the 'ulamā against the British in the nineteenth century, its relationship with the vision of Khilāfat movement, however, also secured for itself a pan-Islamic agenda in terms of preserving Muslim unity around the world. Following are the objectives which were devised in JUH's first conference in January, 1920 at Amritsar and then codified later in May of 1939 by its charter with some changes:<sup>16</sup>

- a. To protect Islam, the Islamic centre (Hijāz), Arabian Peninsula and *Shaʻāir-i Islām* (Symbols of Islam); and defend against those factors which may harm Islamic nationalism.
- b. Protection and acquirement of Muslims' religious and national rights and needs.
- c. To gather the scholars on a common/single platform.
- d. To establish *Sharī'ah* system and institutions.
- e. To strive for complete national and peoples' (personal) freedom as envisaged in the *Sharī'ah*.

- f. To improve the religious, educational, ethical, social, and economic conditions of the Muslims and disseminating the Islamic values within the premises of the country.
- g. Establishing cordial relations based on brotherhood and unity with other Muslim and non-Muslim countries.
- h. Establishing cordial/brotherly and compassionate relations with fellow non-Muslim inhabitants of the country. <sup>17</sup>

A few inferences can be made from the above-mentioned objectives of the JUH. For example, despite having a view of co-existence with the other non-Muslim communities of the subcontinent, the organization took into consideration the sensitive matter of exclusively preserving Muslim interests as well. However, the stance of co-existence with non-Muslim Indian community in JUH's perspective seems to have been directed at the goal of achieving independence from the British. On the other hand and as far as the notion of developing constitution for independent India was concerned (one, into which Indian politics eventually evolved), JUH's notion of preserving Muslim interests through legally defining the interfaith relationship of the communities of India, seems more relevant as a step further envisioned for an independent India's constitutional policy.

## Composite/United Nationalism: The Political Standpoint

As far as achieving its objectives, JUH adopted the policy of legislation; especially so, when it dealt with the problems of preserving Muslim religious rights: its opposition to intermarriages between Muslims and Non-Muslims (1932 C.E.) and asking for constitutional rights for the Muslim Personal Law provide us with examples where it resorted to legal reforms and political action. 18 However, even more interesting is the JUH's particular nationalist character which it acquired especially under the leadership of Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madanī (1939-1957). During this time, the idea of Muslim separatism in the form of Iqbal's Allahabad address (1930) and Chaudhry Rahmat Ali's idea of Pakistan (1933) had already occupied considerable position in Indian Muslim political narrative. Hussain Ahmad however, did not approve of Muslim separatism. Instead, he developed his political stance around the idea of composite/united nationalism. For him, united nationalism contained in itself temporary possibility for political unity that the JUH, on the whole, kept emphasizing until the Partition in 1947 C.E.

Apart from JUH, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (1888-1958 C.E.) who remained an integral part of INC also proposed the coexistence of Muslims with the non-Muslim others in the form of united India. However, the difference between the two is aptly illustrated by Jamal Malik when he writes,

"In his (Indian) nationalist fervor, Āzād differed from scholars such as the Deobandi Ḥusayn Aḥmad Madanī (1879–1957), who did not really transcend boundaries of religious difference and rejected the arguments of both Jinnah, for Islam as the basis of nationalism, and Muḥammad Iqbāl (d. 1938), who had advanced a notion of territorial nationalism [...] Some years later, Āzād expressed severe doubts about the idea that religion could serve as the prime force for Muslim, Christian or Hindu rationality [...] Āzād thus not only declared patriotism a fundamental constituent of the religious heritage of the Muslim but also made an attempt at altering the entire discourse shaping people's imagination with reference to Hindu–Muslim relations in general." 19

Seen in this perspective, one can clearly discern how an emerging socio-political reality such as an independent nation-state provided an impetus for indulging into secular discourse among religious elites such as the 'Ulama in the context of Indian Islam as well as the problems that surfaced and nevertheless remained in its wake.

## Subsequent Split In JUH

Meanwhile, JUH met a split in 1945: those who considered the domination of Hindu majority over the Muslim minority (once the country was to achieve the status of nation-state) in united India as the primary problem for the peoples of India, formed a separate group with the support of the prestigious figure of Shabbir Ahmad Usmani by the name Jam'iyyat 'ulama-i Islam in 1945. JUI supported AIML and hence, the formation of Pakistan.

Analytically, JUH's tireless struggle to work for a united independent India presents one with a loophole while ascertaining the organization's original vision and which lies somewhere in answering the question that whether the organization was exclusively religious or nationalist in the first place? It was religious primarily because the group of people who came together on a platform for its inception was known to be comprised mostly of ulama with an aim of providing guidance to the Muslims per Sharī'ah.<sup>20</sup>

However, what seems more important is the role of people like Maulana Ḥussain Aḥmad Madanī and Mufti Kifayatullah Dehlawi in the organization who presented a specific school of thought which was associated with the nationalist movements such as Silk-Letter (1913-1920) apart from their religious antecedents (which went back to Deoband in general). These people were politically active even before the inception of the JUH and held, without a doubt, a nationalist agenda and plethora of anticolonial sentiments against the British from the very beginning. Hence when Hussain Ahmad took over the office as the President of JUH in 1939, he became the main representative of JUH's political stance on national forums.

In the course of political events in 1930s, his narrative drew particular attention as an 'alim and by the token of which JUH eventually parted ways from the AIML on political front.

In addition, JUH under Hussain Ahmad leadership emphasized Islamic roots in defining its political struggle, which surprisingly supported secular form of democracy as was propounded by INC, during independence movement. But maintaining such views raised crucial questions such as if the ulama in JUH aimed at attaining more political power and religious capital for themselves, arising as an influential social class, such as found in the precolonial setup during the Muslim rule in India – or did it establish itself as a modern political nationalist organization, working for the welfare of the country and its people, just like it was the case with INC and the AIML, all the while, drawing its sincere inspiration from the Islamic tradition? In other words, can it be termed a response to secularization?

On the above, JUH held a unique character given its focal position on the Muslim religious canvas of the Indian society. In particular and especially at a time when Indian communities were met with escalated polarization – both social and religious – as a result of bearing the impact of modern socioeconomic system, it is important to present a brief overview of the JUH's doctrinal development for the purposes of our discussion. While it is true that more than one socio-political and religious organizations were surfacing during the twentieth-century British India, we will concisely touch only two other political bodies, the Indian National Congress (est. 1885) and the All-India Muslim League (est. 1906) because of their relevance with the JUH (est. 1919) in terms of their ideology; Primarily because of the two-nation theory of the AIML, in response to which the JUH developed its view of united nationalism and a political alliance with the INC through which it envisioned the realization of its ideology of gaining independence.

### JUH and the All-India Muslim League

The idea of national independence was rooted in the first objectives of the JUH. It had been clearly stated that one of the goals of its inception was "to strive for complete national freedom of people as envisaged in the *Sharī 'ah.*" In the last decade before Partition (1947), the idea came to mature through Hussain Ahmad Hussain Ahmad viewpoint which proposed the political unity of the peoples of India for common purpose of independence without compromising on their religious preferences. Calling it *Muttaḥida qawmiyyat* (united nationalism), Hussain Ahmad proposed it as a tool for independence against British Imperialism for which unity of all polities of India held tantamount importance.<sup>22</sup>

JUH especially under the leadership of Hussain Ahmad considered British rule in India as occupation aimed at subjugating the natives and sabotaging their rights which the Indians owned as the true inhabitants of the subcontinent. Moreover, the British were also held responsible for the destruction of the once highly esteemed status of the 'ulama which they used to enjoy under Muslim rule. Many ulama in JUH belonging to the same faction also believed that the seed of religious hatred between the diverse Indian communities was also sown by the British<sup>23</sup> and that before the British colonialization, India used to enjoy religious harmony and possessed unmatchable wealth of natural resources. A detailed account of British colonial misgivings was documented by Hussain Ahmad, separately published as, *Bartānvī Sāmrāj nē hamain kēsay lūtā*,<sup>24</sup> in which he explained his perspective of British loot in the subcontinent.

However, despite his personal prejudice against British, the political narrative of JUH especially that of anticolonial sentiment emerged from within the theological paradigm of Islam. To quote Yohannan Friedmann,

"The 'ulama' were convinced that the expulsion of the British from India should be their first goal. They feared that a religious split in the Indian national movement would severely endanger the achievement of this goal and would taint relations between the two communities [...] In an attempt to convince the Muslims of the justice of their opinion, the 'ulama' developed a general world view with which they hoped to justify their political position."<sup>25</sup>

However, such an ideology demanded proof in the political sphere of British India at that time. Soon, the nationalist narrative was being corroborated through a religiously backed argumentation to make it more plausible. The idea, in general, was proposed first against the two-nation theory – a separatist/communalist ideology – expounded by AIML and its followers (especially through the figure of Muhammad Iqbal). Hussain Ahmad, as the president of the JUH, denied the notion that nations are identified on the basis of religion; which made up the touch-stone philosophy of the AIML's struggle for a separate country; rather, he explained in his understanding of the Islamic principles that the inhabitants of any piece of land living together in a particular space-time reality, make up a nation. <sup>26</sup>

Hussain Ahmad's definition of nationalism, therefore, provided the Muslims with an alternative worldview as far as the relationship between religion and national sentiments was concerned. Moreover, it also proposed a reconstruction of Islamic thought in modern India; since, before the idea of united nationalism was construed, the other side of the camp radically denied the existence of any such perception in core Islamic teachings.

In the words of Friedmann,

"In principle, then, the struggle had a self-evident Islamic justification. But when the 'ulamā' wished to lay the ideological foundation for their participation in the struggle against the British in the special circumstances of India, they had to consider another factor. The 'ulamā' and their Muslim followers were not the only fighters against the British, and, in fact, they were not even the main element in this struggle. They were a factor of secondary importance in the Indian national movement, and they supported

the Congress party. Participation in the national movement of a nation which was primarily composed of infidels raised many questions among the pious Muslims, particularly as a result of the energetic propaganda of the Muslim League against co-operation with the Hindus. The 'ulamā' were therefore forced to justify their political stand and to explain how their support of the Indian national movement agrees with the Islamic principles [...] This doctrine, which was elaborated in speeches delivered by the *Jam'iyya* leadership, and in particular in the works of its president Ḥusayn Aḥmad Madanī, was presented as a counter-balance to the Muslim League's 'two nations theory."<sup>27</sup>

Furthermore, since united nationalism ultimately formed the political standpoint of JUH, we find that most of its political moves were drawn to preserve its ideology. The examples can be further elaborated through several events where they were seen not only inclined with the nationalistic, liberal and leftist political parties but also through supporting their cause in letter and spirit. JUH's support especially for INC to ensure the realization of their vision (complete independence) bears testimony to that. Also, from their participation in civil disobedience and non-cooperation movement and to Gandhi's Satyāgraha, we find that the members of the JUH strongly supported those who participated in the upfront nationalist struggle against the British occupation, regardless of the religious preferences.<sup>28</sup>

In JUH's viewpoint, the rivalry between the Indian communities, would have potentially grown, should the British have continued to rule India. Also, the Hindus had grown relatively powerful in nineteenth century against Muslims who were known to have been conservative at first in learning English language and becoming part of their system. The situation nonetheless changed when especially after 1830 C.E., the 'Ulama allowed Muslims not only to learn English language but also to get employed in government's institutions.

On the other hand, the formation of AIML included the top tiers of Muslim community originally from the Aligarh school (a brainchild of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan (1817-1898 C.E.))<sup>29</sup> known for its so-called religious liberalism. AIML was thus founded when in a delegation headed by Agha Khan (1877-1957 C.E.) to meet Lord Minto, the then viceroy of India (1845-1914 C.E.) at Simla, ideas of a separate Muslim representative party were circulated during sessions of the All-India Muhammadan Educational Conference in 1906 C.E. The meetings continued until at last in the Dhaka session of the conference led by Nawab Waqar al-Mulk and Nawab Muhsin al-Mulk, the All-India Muslim League was established on 30 December 1906 C.E. With the inception of the AIML, separate- electorates for Muslims were thus promoted against joint-electorates which was the stance of INC

and also of JUH at one point. For AIML, separate electorates could secure Muslims' political stature in India. In the words of Khalid Bin Sayeed:

"It was on 30 December that All-India Muslim League was established. Leaders who played a prominent part in creating this organization at Dacca were Nawab Viqar-ul-Mulk, Nawab Salimullah of Dacca, and Mazhar-ul-Huq. Maulana Muhammad Ali was also present and was one of the principal draftsmen of the League Constitution. The first resolution stated that the following were the three objectives of the League: firstly, to foster a sense of loyalty to the British Government among the Muslims of India; secondly, to look after the political interests of Indian Muslims; and thirdly, to bring about better understanding between Muslims and other communities." <sup>30</sup>

Muhammad Ali Jinnah (1876-1948 C.E.) — earlier a congressman — joined the AIML in 1913 C.E. However, his direct influence on the party could only be understood in the events after 1935 C.E. when he became the president of AIML and especially after the 1936-7 C.E. elections, when its original vision of separate electorates transformed into an ideology of the two-nation theory and the party struggled to acquire a separate homeland for the Muslims of the subcontinent. <sup>31</sup>

Especially from 1935 onwards, AIML's focus remained on its demand of separate electorates and reserving the political quota for the Muslims once the subcontinent was to self-rule despite its earlier liberal and progressive political character which can be identified in the Lucknow Pact of 1916, and which also was a joint contract of the AIML and the INC.

W.C. Smith has also pointed to this phase of AIML as the popular one when he writes, "A complete change gradually came over the Muslim League: from being the meeting-place and organ of a few high officials, wealthy landowners, and successful professional men, it was transformed into a movement, vigorous and popular."<sup>32</sup>

Therefore, it was after 1935, that the popularity of the AIML considerably grew owing to its intense campaign as an opposition party, against INC under the leadership of Jinnah. The idea of the two-nation theory, of which Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938), the then General Secretary, was a proponent, raised the question of religion and political associations accordingly. In his address of Allahabad, 1930, Iqbal had said,

"I would like to see the Punjab, N.W.F.P, Sindh and Baluchistan amalgamate into a single state. Self-government within or without the British empire, and the formation of consolidated Northwest Indian Muslim state appears to me to be the final destiny of the Muslim at least of North West of India [...]."<sup>33</sup>

The AIML held this view and insisted that nationalism was based upon religion, which is to state that, the identity of the nation was based on the religion it follows especially in the given circumstances of the subcontinent where Muslims made up a separate nation with distinct culture and ideology.

Based on its two-nation theory, AIML evolved gradually aiming at

the position to claim for itself as the only Muslim representative party in India to vote for. To cite an example from Jinnah's particular stance on the matter, an incident can be referred to when in the presence of Jinnah, Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964) claimed, given to his Congress' idea of nationalism, that there were only two forces in India: British Imperialism and Indian Nationalism. Jinnah had responded by saying, "There was another party, 'the Muslim League' which *alone* had the right to represent the Muslims of India." The stance of Jinnah in this regard can be further elaborated from excerpts taken from his address in Lucknow, 1937: "There is another group that turns towards INC, and they do so because they have lost faith in themselves. I want the Mussalmans to believe in themselves and take their destiny in their own hands [...] *No settlement with the majority is possible*." <sup>35</sup>

Gradually the rift on the basis of religion grew stronger between the AIML and the other leftist parties including the INC and JUH, and it soon came to be recognized because of its agenda of separate electorates for Muslim minority provinces and two-nation theory. The circumstances took a toll in 1940, when in the Lahore session of the AIML, the idea of Pakistan (although formerly envisioned earlier by Chaudhary Rahmat Ali (1895-1951) with his peers in his pamphlet, "Now or never: Are we to live or perish forever?")<sup>36</sup> was adopted as part of its resolution.

The Muslim community of the subcontinent certainly represented a nation in its own regard as was argued by Jinnah and the AIML. However, considering the role of religion and establishing such a vision, it is important to refer to the correspondence between Hussain Ahmad of JUH and Igbal of the AIML in which both presented each other with the arguments of the meaning of a nation in accordance with religious principles of Islam.<sup>37</sup> While Hussain Ahmad maintained that the term nation applies to the inhabitants of a particular country despite their religious affiliations and that collaborating with each other forming political alliances is possible while keeping religious differences at bay, all in the name of preserving national interests and country's sovereignty, Iqbal argued that such a vision was inspired by the modern perception of western nationalism which was against Islamic ethos. He considered such nationalism antagonistic to the status of religion in the lives of the people. In Iqbal's view, religion was not to be disregarded and Muslims were to be considered an 'ummah' - a nation in their own standing.<sup>38</sup> Therefore, no kind of political unanimity could have been reached with the non-Muslims upon the compromise of religious identity to preserve nationalist sentiments, as was proposed by Hussain Ahmad. In the words of Metcalf,

Madani's position throughout was to insist on the Islamic legitimacy of embracing a culturally plural, secular democracy as the best and the only realistic future for India's Muslims. The cleric sided with the Indian Nationalist Congress.

The Cambridge- and Munich-educated lawyer insisted on a religiously defined, homogeneous Muslim society.<sup>39</sup>

However, the question to be asked in our socio-historical perspective is if the existence of a country, with a separate identity on the basis of religion could have been possible at all, as was envisioned in the form of Pakistan, or was it just a power struggle between the Muslims of the AIML and the Hindus of the INC to have greater share of political control? Furthermore, what would have been the status of the minorities in the modern state of Muslims such as Pakistan especially in terms of their inclusion in the political and national affairs of the country if the state was to maintain its exclusive religious identity with Muslims as the majority? Will they be ushered into the backseat to stay submissive to the rule of the so-called Islamic Republic or would there be other possible ramifications for their existence with most of the Muslims in the state of Pakistan?

The answer to the first question is lost to the debate concerning if AIML and particularly Jinnah, were really struggling to have an Islamic republic in the first place or was it some version of a secular state within the confines of Islamic ideology (a form of Islamic secularity, perhaps?). Many discourses are available on both sides of the camp to establish their respective claims. What is certain, however, is that Pakistan was envisioned to be a state with enough Islamic principles to be part of its inherent constitution to safely call it Islamic republic, regardless of if she's run by the ideologists or by the opportunists.

However, to answer the second question of minorities in the Muslim state of Pakistan and which really concerns us in the perspective of religious co-existence, we may investigate Pakistan's present-day political inclination. For one thing, Pakistan today does not depict the vision of Iqbal at least, not if his claim was that no political alliance was possible with the non-Muslim majority even to preserve national interests, such as he had propounded in his debate against nationalism as represented by Hussain Ahmad. For Pakistan today is struggling and succumbing to the pressure of becoming a tolerant and pluralist country and her politicians are repeatedly urging the minorities to stand up for their national identity (Pakistanis) despite their religious differences.<sup>40</sup>

Even sociologically, there has been a history of long rivalry of interreligious communities giving rise to extreme forms of sectarianism in the present-day Pakistan. It also includes Muslim religious exclusivism which, until recently, had seemed weary of embracing the minorities such as Hindus and Christians, into the national fold of Pakistan. However, the modern political affairs have somehow necessitated the Pakistani society to embrace the idea of plural existence, which in any case, does not conform to the original character of the two-nation ideology. Nonetheless, the changing macro socio-political realities, such as in Social Age and global political activism, the shift of politics from conflict to peace resolutions in the form of the emergence of Chinese and Russian Peace contracts, against the previously held, conflict-based politics of America and some European nations in general, have resulted into major shifts in the socio-political character of Pakistan in the recent years. Thus, in other words, to be recognized as a religiously tolerant and pluralist society, has become more than a necessity for Pakistan.

### **JUH and The Indian National Congress**

The first native-Indian political precedence was set by the inception of the Indian National Congress (INC) when a few of the British politicians in c.1880 proposed an idea of creating a political organization from among the Indians. Supposedly, the idea was be to purge the violence and seek to non-violent political means to translate the demands of the Indian people to the ruling government. Allan Octavian Hume (1829-1912 C.E.), a veteran British officer, discussed this idea in the 1880's with the other British parliamentarians and Lord Dufferin (1826-1902 C.E.), the then viceroy of India. Thereafter and in 1885 C.E., Hume also discussed his proposal with the native Indian leadership and called upon the convention of the Indian National Union, which he had already formed in 1884 C.E. About seventy people attended the convention, most of whom belonged to the educated middle class of the country including lawyers, journalists, and educationists.<sup>41</sup>

The INC was thus established in December 1885 C.E. first presided over by Womesh Chandra Banergee (1884-1906 C.E.), who was also elected the first president of the INC with Hume as secretary general of the organization. The main objectives of INC as recorded in its foundational statutes were to a) promote friendly associations among all those who shared national interests of the country, b) to eradicate all possible race, creed and provincial prejudices, with friendly intercourse among the brethren of the country and c) to have a proper representation of the native Indians in the country's politics, legitimately authorised by the British government.<sup>42</sup>

It should also be pondered upon that one of the beneficiaries of such initiatives was the British government itself. INC's vision, on the other hand and as was envisaged, was to work for the proper representation of the Indian people and hence to translate Indians' interests to the ruling government. Especially in legislative councils, it had to make sure that the Indian representatives were given appropriate proportional ratio while the laws and constitution were developed. In addition, since the main objective was to represent Indians' political interests, it had to attain more political authority through learning about the British political strategies effectively. This is also

one of the reasons why the INC was found to display serious political enthusiasm especially when there was a regime change such as during British Parliamentary elections.<sup>43</sup> In the words of W.C. Smith,

The Congress has been by far the largest, most important, and most representative political organization in India. Various interested and influential parties (such as the British government and the censored press) carried on propaganda to the effect that it represented Hindus but not Muslims. This has been simply untrue. It has been particularly untrue in crises.<sup>44</sup>

While it is true that in the beginning, only the educated classes from the Hindus became part of it, gradually many among Muslim intelligentsia also became part of it. It ran its course of politics and was presided over by several figures who later became ideologues. People like Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, Womesh Banerjee and Motilal Nehru (1861-1931), just to name a few of them, formed an integral part of INC's vision.

INC actively participated in Indian politics and addressed the issues related to the rights of Indians as independent and native people. In the words of Gordon John, in his book 'Provincial politics and Indian Nationalism',

The organisation which finally produced the 'authoritative statement' was the Indian National Congress. Here, from a continental platform, Indians put forward the demands they had already been making through the provincial associations. Prominent among these were proposals for reform of the legislative councils in India (so that they would become more powerful and include more Indians), reform of the civil service (to allow Indians easier access to the highest ranks of the bureaucracy), reform of judicial administration and legal procedure (to bring them into line with the practices established in England), an end to discriminatory racial legislation (notably the acts which forbade Indians to carry fire-arms on the same terms as Europeans), proposals about how India might best be developed, and changes in the methods of levying taxes.<sup>45</sup>

With regards to INC's nationalist agenda, we find that its main objective throughout its pre-partition political history was to acquire the right of self-government as it was ascribed by the British Crown to the countries like Canada and Australia. However, their struggle was to achieve their national goal by developing an expertise in the political atmosphere of British India on purely secular fundamentals such as those already developed in the British parliament. Most of the major political moves and reforms were first proposed from the side of the INC in this regard. Similarly, their nationalism targeted primarily the British imperialism while adopting the model of modern emergence of nationalist struggles around the world, especially during the first half of the twentieth century.

One of the undertakings of the INC to initiate people into Civil Disobedience programme stated, "[...] (he/she) must be a believer in Hindu-Muslim unity, believe in non-violence as absolutely essential for the redress of Khilaphat [...] and, if a Hindu, must by his personal conduct show that he regards untouchability as a blot upon Nationalism."<sup>47</sup>

The statement is crucial to the critique done in respect of the communal character of the INC by the token of which it struck sectarian crises within the Muslims and struggled to enforce Hindu nationalism in the subcontinent, such as found in the discourses of Ishtiaq Ahmad (1947-)<sup>48</sup> and the like. According to such critics, it was the irresistible Hindu struggle of power within the ranks of INC that sparked the nationalist sentiments on the Muslims' part. The historical documents of the INC and its persistence with the joint electorates, however, go against its communal character, at least in principle. The Lucknow Pact of 1916, in which it even conceded to the AIML's demands of separate electorates to achieve a consensus between the Hindu and Muslim collective representation of the subcontinent, is yet another proof of its nationalist character.

Nevertheless, the role of INC especially in terms of meeting the demands of the AIML to preserve Muslim interests in the provinces under INC's governance formed the main bone of contention between the two parties, especially before the time of Partition.

The JUH, however, not only stood united with the INC, but also, its members frequently used the INC's platform to arouse nationalist sentiments among the Muslims in opposition to the AIML's ideology.

### **Conclusion**

The role of 'ulama in the organization of JUH reflects anomalies in as far stereotyping their character as non-secular, politically conservative is concerned. On the contrary, JUH's stance on nationalism and their recognition of other non-Muslim communities of India presents an interesting case of how the prospect of modern, independent nation-state played a role in developing such a religiopolitical discourse. Moreover, after the Partition in 1947, JUH was made part of the Indian legislative board through which it secured minority rights of Muslims interestingly through vouching for a secular India. This transformation of the role of 'ulama should further be undertaken by the scholars to ascertain the factors further which promote secularity and religious pluralism in an otherwise and politically estranged yet deeply religious organizations, like the one highlighted in the character of JUH.

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- <sup>2</sup> William Dalrymple, "The East India Company: The Original Corporate Raiders," *The Guardian*, March 04, 2015 2015.
- <sup>3</sup> Barbara Daly Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860-1900* (Karachi, Pakistan: Royal Book Company, 1989), 4.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 5-6.

- <sup>5</sup> W.C. Smith, *Modern Islam in India: A Social Analysis* (United Kingdom: Milton Keynes), 1-4.
- <sup>6</sup> Ibid., 5-23,46-8, 155-65.
- <sup>7</sup> Usha Sanyal, *Ahmad Riza Khan Barelwi: In the Path of the Prophet* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2005), 11-12.
- <sup>8</sup>Tariq Hasan, *Colonialism and the Call to Jihad in British India* (New Delhi: Sage publications, 2015), 33-4.
- <sup>9</sup>Sultan Mahmood, Hafiz Nasiruddin, and Muhammad Rizwan, "Struggle for Islamic State and Society: An Analysis of Syed Ahmad Shaheed's Jihad Movement," *Pakistan Annual Research Journal* 50 (2014): 178-79.
- <sup>10</sup>Muhammad Mian, *Ulama-I Hind Kā Shāndār Māzī*, 4 vols., vol. 4 (Ishtiaq A. Mushtaq Printing Press, Lahore: Muhammad Riyaz Durrani, 2010), 842-43.
- <sup>11</sup>Hasan, Colonialism and the Call to Jihad in British India, 65.
- <sup>12</sup> Metcalf, Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860-1900, 87-8.
- <sup>13</sup>Mian, *Ulama-I Hind Kā Shāndār Māżī*, 4, 843.
- <sup>14</sup>The uprising could be seen rise apart from Muslims as well such as in the Satyāgraha movement from Mohandas Gandhi (1869-1948 C.E.) and overall non-cooperation movement under the umbrella of which many political organizations such as INC and the Khilāfat Movement stood united. Ibid. 228.
- <sup>15</sup> Parvīn Rozīna, *Jami'yyat Al-'Ulamā Hind: Dastāvīzāt Markazī Ijlās Haye 'Ām (1919-1945 C.E.)*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Islamabad: National Institute of History, Culture and Research, 1980), 12-13.
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid., 41-9.
- <sup>17</sup>Muhammad Mian, ed. *Jam'iyyat Ulama Kia Hai?*, Third ed. (Ishtiaq A. Mushtaq Printing Press, Lahore: Muhammad Riyaz Durrani, 2004; reprint, 2004), 13-4.
- <sup>18</sup>Ibid., 16-24.
- <sup>19</sup> Jamal Malik, "Toward Historicizing an Indian Nationalist Salafī: The Case of Abū L-Kalām Āzād," in *Muslim Minorities in Modern Times*, ed. Yohanan Friedmann (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 2019), 84-5.
- <sup>20</sup>Mian, Jam'iyyat Ulama Kia Hai?, 13-4.

- <sup>21</sup>Ulama-I Haq Aur Unkē Mujāhidāna Kārnāmay, 1, 226-29.
- <sup>22</sup> Hussayn Ahmed Madani, "Masla-I Qaumiyyat Awr Islam," in *Muttahidda Qaumiyyat Aur Islam* (Lahore: Muhammad Riyaz Durrani), 152-54.
- <sup>23</sup> Husain Ahmed Madani, *Bartanvi Samuraj Ne Hamain Kesay Luta?*, Fourth ed. (Lahore: Haji Hanif and sons., 2010), 169-84.
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid., 63-98.
- <sup>25</sup> Yohanan Friedmann, "The Attitude of the Jam'iyyat Al-'ulamā-'i Hind to the Indian National Movement and to the Establishment of Pakistan," *Asian and African Studies* 7 (1971): 158.
- <sup>2626</sup> Saeed Ahmed Akbarabadi, *Hind Pakistan Ki Tehreek-E-Azadi Awr 'Ulama-E-Haq Ka Siyasi Moqaf* (Ishtiaq A. Mushtaq Press, Lahore: Muhammad Riyaz Durrani, 2007). It should also be noted here that the first ever notion of nationalism in this light was provided by Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī when he referred to the Madīna Pact in the context of modern multi-religious societies. Hussain Ahmad Madani, *Muttahidda Qaumiyat Aur Islam* (Lahore: Muhammad Riyaz Durrani, 2006), 79-80.
- <sup>27</sup> Friedmann, "The Attitude of the Jam'iyyat Al-'ulamā-'i Hind to the Indian National Movement and to the Establishment of Pakistan," 162.
- <sup>28</sup> Akbarabadi, *Hind Pakistan Ki Tehreek-E-Azadi Awr 'Ulama-E-Haq Ka Siyasi Moqaf*, 152.
- <sup>29</sup>For a critical analysis of Syed Ahmed Khan's influence on people other than those from Aligarh such as Abu'l-Kalam Azad, see Malik, "Toward Historicizing an Indian Nationalist Salafī: The Case of Abū L-Kalām Āzād," 70-75.
- <sup>30</sup>Khalid Bin Sayeed, *Pakistan, the Formative Phase 1857-1948*, Second ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1968; repr., 1998), 30.
- <sup>31</sup>There were many against this view who vouched for joint-electorates and an independent but united India even apart from JUH. For a relatively latest survey on those who criticized the idea of separate homeland from within the Muslims in India, see Ali Usman Qasmi and Megan Eaton Robb, eds., *Muslims against the Muslim League: Critiques of the Idea of Pakistan* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2017).
- <sup>32</sup> Smith, Modern Islam in India: A Social Analysis, 287.
- Abdul Majid, Abdul Hamid, and Zahida Habib, "Genesis of the Two Nations Theory and the Quaid-E-Azam," *Pakistan Vision* 15, no. 1 (2015): 186.
- <sup>34</sup> Ibid., 185. Emphasis added.
- <sup>35</sup> Smith, *Modern Islam in India: A Social Analysis*, 289. (Emphasis added)
- <sup>36</sup> Chaudhary Rahmat Ali, "Now or Never: Are We to Live or Perish Forever?," *Pakistan Movement Historical Documents* (1969): 103-10.
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- <sup>38</sup> Javed Iqbal, *Zinda Rūd*, Second ed., 2 vols., vol. 2 (Lahore: Sang-i Mīl Publications, Iqbal Academy of Pakistan, 2004), 80-83.

- <sup>39</sup> Barbara Metcalf, "An Argumentative Indian: Maulana Husain Ahmed Madani, Islam and Nationalism in India," in *Islamic Legitimacy in a Plural Asia*, ed. Anthony Reid and Michael Gilsenan (London: Routledge, 2007), 88.
- <sup>40</sup> Reuters, "At Hindu Temple, Pm Nawaz Reaches out to Minorities," Express Tribune, January 11, 2017.
- <sup>41</sup>Bhogaraju Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *The History of the Indian National Congress* (Delhi: S. Chand, 1969), 22-23.
- <sup>42</sup>Ibid., 27-8.
- <sup>43</sup>Gordon Johnson, *Provincial Politics and Indian Nationalism*, Bombay and the Indian National Congress 1880-1915 (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 5-14.
- <sup>44</sup> Smith, *Modern Islam in India: A Social Analysis*, 242.
- <sup>45</sup> Johnson, *Provincial Politics and Indian Nationalism*, 13.
- <sup>46</sup> B.R. Nanda, *Road to Pakistan: The Life and Times of Muhammad Ali Jinnah* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2010), 24.
- <sup>47</sup> Sitaramayya, *The History of the Indian National Congress*, 368.
- <sup>48</sup> Ishtiaq Ahmad, "Competing Religious Nationalisms and the Partition of British India," *Pakistan Journal of Culture and History* 26, no. 2 (2005): 1-3.

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