Ever since the demise of Islamic political order in the Indian sub-continent, its Muslim population remained communally surcharged. From Shah Waliullah (1703-1762) onwards a number of Muslim thinkers like Muhammad Qasim Nanautawi (1833-77) Mawlana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi (1828-1905) and Sir Sayed Ahmad Khan (1817-1898) took up the leadership of Muslims to revive the Islamic glory. The first two who had acted as commander and Qadi (Judge) of the fighting force in Shamali rebellion in 1857 against the British -launched Deoband movement to push back the Muslims into medieval era for Shariatisation of India. The third one had launched the Aligarh movement for modern education among the Muslims and for their political domination over Hindus in British India. Sir Mohammad Iqbal (1877-1938) popularly revered as Allama (Great Scholar) Iqbal on the other hand enunciated two-nation theory and separated Muslim nationalism from Indian nationalism with the same objective and became the political ideologue for Pakistan movement. He did not continue with his intellectual worldview on Indian nationalism, which he often projected during his student days. He was the first seminal Islamist, who expanded this theory of Muslim separatism in his presidential speech of Muslim League session at Allahabad in 1930 and firmly established it in Indian Muslim mind for their political exclusivism. Later Mohammad Ali Jinnah implemented it as political ideology for accelerating Pakistan movement.

Since the consolidation of British power in India, the descendant of Mogul nobility remained in the forefront of the Muslim leadership in political social and even religious matters. They could successfully produce a middle class among converted Muslims through modern education among them along with Islamic knowledge. It was their tactical move to use them as fighters for their self-seeking political interest. Sir Sayed Ahmad Khan was the first Mogul scion, who launched Aligarh movement for modern education among his community members. "The main preoccupation of these modernists was the uplift of Muslims as a group by defending their position as former rulers" (The Muslim
During British colonial rule the Muslims of Indian sub-continent were profoundly influenced by the religio-political thought of Shah Waliullah and Sir Sayed Ahmad Khan. These two leaders had attempted to update the political psyche of the Muslims as former rulers of the country and their social hegemony over the Hindus. To carry forward the legacy of these leaders Iqbal created an ideological platform for Muslim national movement and created conceptual base for creation of Pakistan. With a view to fulfill their dream the educated Muslim middle class under the influence of Iqbal's political thought joined the political movement for uplift of Muslims as an exclusive social and religious group.

Unlike Sir Sayed Ahmad, who was a Mogul scion, Iqbal was a descendant of a Kshmiri Pundit and was therefore deeply rooted to the cultural tradition of Indian sub-continent in his student days. His vibrant poetic talent and academic brilliance gave him iconic status in Indian society. But deeply influenced with Aligarh movement of Sir Sayed Ahmad, who was loyal to the British and strongly opposed to the Muslims joining Indian national Congress with a plea that it was a Hindu-dominated organisation - Iqbal also became a supporter of political Islamists in the country.

Mohammad Iqbal was widely known as poet, philosopher, lawyer, jurist and spiritual Godfather of Pakistan. He was a versatile genius but "full of inner contradictions in different periods of his life" (Studies in Oriental Culture - Edited by Hafeez Malk, Columbia University, 1971, Page iv/ Iqbal And Foundation of Pakistan nationalism: Manzoor H.Khatana, 1992, Lahore, page iv). He proved his poetic talent as a symbol of Indian nationalism during his student days in Sialkot and Lahore, when he composed the song 'Sare Jahan Se Achha Hindostan Hamaara (Our India is best in the whole world) ... Mazhab Nahin Sikhata Aapas Me Bair Rakhana''Hindi hain Ham Watan hain Hindostan Hamara (Religion does not teach animosity towards each other, we are all Indians, India is our country) in 1900.

"In the first of his poetic and philosophical statements, Iqbal still took position not of Muslim but of all-Indian nationalism and did not call for the isolation of the Muslims. However, the contradiction of his world view was manifested in the fact that while fighting to overcome religious barriers, he remained overall a Muslim" (Studies in Oriental Culture - Edited by Hafeez Malk, Columbia University, 1971, Page 112). He therefore, completely negated this initial passion in him for this country, when he turned into a political Islamist and communally divided the people of the region. The turning point in his intellectual perspective therefore, prevented his poetry to become universal, as its appeal took a turn from Indian nationalism to Muslim nationalism.

Iqbal's concept of parochial nationalism was initially floated by Shah Waliullah (1703-1762) and subsequently pronounced by Sir Sayed Ahmad Khan as two-nation theory in 1880s for communal division of Indian subcontinent. Amidst much controversy, Khan said in 1883 that Hindus and Muslims constituted two separate nations (Studies in Islamic Culture by Prof. Aziz Ahmad, 2000, Page 265). But this delusive theory was formally enunciated by Iqbal in Allahabad session of All India Muslim League presided over by him in 1930 but adopted and implemented by Jinnah (1876 -1948) for creation of Pakistan. Iqbal persuaded Jinnah to bargain for a separate homeland exclusively for the Muslims. "In a letter to Jinnah on June 21, 1937 Iqbal stated unequivocally: a separate federation of Muslim provinces.... is the only course
by which we can secure a peaceful India and save Muslims from the domination of non-Muslims" (Studies in Oriental Culture – Edited by Hafeez Malk, Columbia University, 1971, Page XI).

Iqbal stayed in Europe (1905-1908) for higher studies and did his Ph.D. from the University of Munich in 1907. He joined the British Committee of All India Muslim League in 1908 (The Oxford Encyclopaedia of the Modern Islamic World, 1995, Vol. 2, page 222) before his return to India the same year. By the time he returned from Europe the colonial authorities were preparing for splitting the national force of Hindu-Muslim unity with a grant of separate electorates for the Muslims. But Iqbal never looked back to his initial nationalist outlook to meet the challenge of this divisive game of the British. He was found guided more by his communally biased political thought, which was contrary to his natural poetic intellect. He closely monitored the Muslim psyche and became to a Muslim activist due to his mystic Islamic background and gradually became an ardent advocate of Muslim nationalism at the cost of Indian nationalism.

By first decade of twentieth century, when Indian National Congress emerged as a political force, Iqbal also joined with political Islamists for political domination of Muslims as they were against a democratic system of governance in the Hindu-majority country. He was however, never rated as a skilful politician despite the fact that he was a political ideologue for Pakistan movement. "Iqbal was not a skilful politician but provided ideological leadership articulating the Muslims' demand for a separate Muslim state .... He must be seen as a political mentor of Jinnah in regard to the creation of Pakistan" (Ibid. Page 224).

Against strong opposition of Jinnah to Khilafat movement, Iqbal gave his poetic support to it and sympathised with Muslim clerics like Maulana Mohammad Ali, Mawlana Saukat Ali, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and others, who had strong commitment to pan-Islamic cause and the temporal power of Islam vested in Caliphate. His poem along with 'Vande Mataram' of Bankim Chandra formed part of the marching songs during Khilafat and non-cooperation movements. The collapse of Ottoman Empire stirred him to play intellectual role for Muslim politics during freedom movement. His poetic intellect however, never bothered him to react even against the abusive observation against Mahatma Gandhi by Mawlana Mohammad Ali, "who publicly held that a fallen Muslim was better than Gandhi" (Iqbal And Foundation of Pakistani Nationalism: Manzoor H.Khatana, 1992, Lahore, Page 236).
When Iqbal deeply understood the psyche of the Muslim community that it was not ready to live under democratic system of rule in Hindu-majority country, he entered practical politics in 1926 and was elected as a member of Punjab Legislative Council. He became a committed pan-Islamist for Muslim separatism and got national stature in Muslim politics only when Jinnah took self-political exile in London. In the absence of any Muslim leader of Jinnah's political brilliance Iqbal was elected to preside over the AIML session at Allahabad in 1930. This session of Muslim League proved to be an end of an era when Indian National Congress (INC) under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi made sincere efforts for Hindu-Muslim unity. Iqbal's on-off interpretation of nationalism set aside the Hindu-Muslim unity effort of the Indian National Congress. "Z.A.Suleri has rightly pointed out that the share of Iqbal in shaping the destiny of Indian Muslims was tremendous. As a matter of fact the entire Muslim intelligentsia who demanded Pakistan was inspired by Iqbal"( The Cambridge History of India:Vol. VI, Page 810).

In his presidential address Iqbal demanded a consolidated state exclusively for Muslims. This communal and separatist demand gave him the status of a most important Muslim political thinker of Indian sub-continent, though politics was never his cup of tea. His conversion from an Indian nationalist poet-philosopher to a narrow communal interpreter of socio-political scenario of his time permanently divided the two major religious communities of this land. It was contrary to his earlier stand in 1900, when he composed his most popular song referred to.

Muslim middle class and feudal section in the community always suffered from a fear complex of Hindu domination over them in British India. They continuously remained in search of a vent for their political frustration. The period when freedom movement under Indian National Congress got momentum Iqbal created a vent to this frustration in his presidential narrative in the Allahabad session of Muslim League by expanding the two-nation theory for its logical conclusion. Satisfying the group in the community that was more interested for sharing power than for spiritual elevation he could successfully create a mad-rage of the Muslims against the Indian National Congress that was regarded by him as an organisation fighting for 'Hindu India'.

Iqbal introduced religion in politics and gave intellectual interpretation to it. "As a Muslim Iqbal could not accept separation of religion and politics. According to him the foundations of politics must be found in religion. Politics divorced from Din (Islamic faith) amounted to a Machiavellian ethical system"(Iqbal And Foundation of Pakistan nationalism: Manzoor H.Khatana, 1992, Lahore, page 109-110).

The session of the League, which he presided – gave him the status of a pioneer Muslim thinker, who aroused the Muslims against the challenge of democracy. His contribution to arouse the collective communal consciousness of Indo-Pakistani Muslims reached to such a height that the spirituality in Islam became subservient to the political concept of the faith. He prescribed the two-nation theory as the only political solution for the Muslims to get rid of the lurking majority-Hindu-rule and thereby became founder of communal politics in India. Contrary to the pluralistic character of Indian society, which is a melting pot of various cultural and ethnic groups, Iqbal's thesis made Muslim communalism a reality in India.
Giving ideological basis for Muslim State Iqbal said: "A community which is inspired by feelings of ill-will towards other communities is low and ignoble. I entertain the highest respect for the customs, laws, religious and social institutions of other communities. Yet I love the communal group, which is the source of my life and my behaviour; and which has formed me what I am by giving me its religion, its literature, its thought, its culture, and thereby recreating its whole past as a living operative factor, in my present consciousness. I therefore demand formation of a consolidated Muslim State in best interest of India and Islam" (The Cambridge History of India: Vol. VI, Page 809). He added, "The question of Muslim poverty could be solved only by the law of Islam which is impossible to be enforced without a free Muslim State or States". "A separate federation of Muslim provinces is the only course by which we can secure a peaceful India and save Muslims from the domination of non-Muslims" (Ibid. Page 810.). Had Iqbal been alive he could have seen how peaceful India remained after formation of a separate Muslim State of Pakistan.

Iqbal's vision for political supremacy of Muslims not only strengthened the centuries-old movement for communal separatism launched by political Islamists in India, it actually gave political ideology to Pakistan movement. The two-nation theory could ignite the imagination of Indian Muslims only when Iqbal enunciated it in his presidential address of Muslim League session. A Pakistani writer questioned him - "Did he (Iqbal) not adopt the very nationalism (akin to tribalism), which the Prophet of Islam had come to destroy?" (Iqbal and Foundation of Pakistan: Manzoor H.Khatana, 1992, Lahore, page iii)?

The presidential address of Iqbal in the above mentioned session of All India Muslim League not only turned the course of Indian history but permanently prevented the Indian Muslims from connecting with Indian nationalism based on cultural and religious diversity of this land. He blocked them from striving for a pluralistic Indian society with bondage of cultural Indianism. His address was the motherboard for Muslim national movement, which justified creation of 'Muslim India within India'.

"Unlike Jinnah, Iqbal was consistently committed to separatist tendencies and was unwilling to yield to the Congress for a greater Muslim cause" (Iqbal And Foundation of Pakistan nationalism: Manzoor H.Khatana, 1992, Lahore, page 261). During 1936-37 Iqbal wrote "eight letters to Jinnah emphasising the partition of India into two states" (The Oxford Encyclopaedia of the Modern Islamic World, 1995, Vol. 2, page 224) and convinced him with his communal and separatist politics that united Hindu-Muslim nation was not a reality. In one of his letters he strongly opposed atheist socialism of Nehru. When Jinnah failed to bargain for AIML as exclusive representative body of Muslims against Congress insistence on secularism, he adopted the separatist communal politics of Iqbal.

Iqbal died in 1938 but he successfully converted Jinnah, from ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity to a communal Muslim leader. Latter Jinnah adopted a resolution for Pakistan movement in Lahore session of the League in 1940 and made Hindu-Muslim divide a political ideology for Indian Muslims.

If we look back to the post-Mogul history of India we find that all the political Islamists since the downfall of Mogul Empire claimed
themselves as custodian of Muslim society. Iqbal while consolidating their thinking in his presidential address of Muslim League accelerated the process of Islamic activism by making spiritual aspect of Islam as subservient to political power. The ongoing struggle for retention of religious identity by the Muslims is only the offshoot of the same religio-political agenda expanded by Iqbal and accepted by all in post-partition India. It remained a recurring theme of academic debate, which however visibly impaired the fundamental commitment of Indian Muslims to their cultural bondage with this country. He carried forward the cultural and social legacy of Islamic India and gave political ideology for Muslim separatism. His "most enduring legacy is not his 'reconstruction of Islamic thought' (title of a book written by him) but his idea of an autonomous homeland for Indian Muslims" (The Muslim Almanac - Edited by Azim A. Nanji, 1996, page 67).

People are born Hindus or Muslims by accident or conviction might be a debatable issue but the humanistic convictions of intellectuals are never shaded by religious obsession. Intellectual community might have wondered over the intellectual duplicity of Iqbal when his humanistic conviction that 'religion does not teach animosity' got diluted. Iqbal's separatist and communal ideology that the Hindus and the Muslims cannot live together was an intellectual irony. But is it not more ironical that hardly any Muslim criticised him to a level it deserves? Even though his two-nation theory gave ideological boost to Pakistan movement, Indian Muslims still revere him.

The main contribution of Iqbal in the political context of Islam was that he was instrumental in bringing about intellectual orientation of communal renaissance in the Muslim community of Indian sub-sub-continent. He separated nationalism from patriotism and thereby created an intellectual division between the two though both are two sides of the same coin. His concept of Muslim nationalism however, meant political unity of Muslims in Indian sub-continent under a common geographical boundary. He never thought about the Indian society as a whole with majority of non-Muslims. Contrary to the ushering of modern worldview, Iqbal also regarded the medieval social and political order as only option for the Muslims.

"Iqbal held that nationalism implies the Indian Muslims to leave aside their faith, their identity in the nationality of other Indian nations or Indianism" (Secularisation of Muslim Behaviour: Moin Shakir, 1973, Page 25). He declared that "the formation of the consolidated Muslim state is in the best interest of India" (Secularisation of Muslim Behaviour: Moin Shakir, 1973, Page 25). He was not ready to understand that Indian nationalism does not mean domination of Hinduism over other religion. "It is also wrong to characterise Indian Nationalism as an instrument of Hindu domination" (Secularisation of Muslim Behaviour: Moin Shakir, 1973, Page 25).

Iqbal was against secularism. For him "Islam is only an effort to realise the spiritual in a human organisation"(Iqbal And Foundation of Pakistan nationalism: Manzoor H.Khatana, 1992, Lahore, page -110). "Iqbal emerged from his European stay as a champion of Islam. His early Indian nationalism seemed to have given way to his newly found Islamic universalism"(Iqbal And Foundation of Pakistan nationalism: Manzoor H.Khatana, 1992, Lahore, page -119).

Even with his western education Iqbal's political outlook remained completely modeled with Islamic concept of governance. Like Sir Sayed Ahmad, Iqbal also created a wedge between Hindus and Muslims. In fact Sir Sayed preached no politics to the Muslims and vehemently
opposed their joining Indian National Congress, Iqbal mesmerised them to jump in communal politics against majority community.

The history of Muslim politics in post-colonial India as we see today is deeply rooted to the political philosophy of Iqbal formulated in Allahabad session of All India Muslim League. Even though Islam failed to unify the Arab world, the birthplace of this religion, Iqbal mesmerised the Muslim mass through political interpretation of Islam, which hardly had any spiritual base. The political deprivation of Muslims as they feel today is the legacy of Iqbal they have been going on even after partition of the country.

The political frustration and mistrust of Muslims against the ruling group has not allowed the community to be the part of the national mainstream. Sharp decline in their share of government job from over 60 percent in the pre-British era to 34 percent in the British period and further decline in it in post-colonial India (India and Pakistan – Unending Conflict by Prakash Chander, 2003, Page 37) might have been the cause of concern to the community. The decline is not due to any anti-Muslim policy of the government but it is all due to religious obsession of the larger section of the community towards government sponsored secular education. If they want to compete with non-Muslims, they must transform the curriculum of madrasas befitting to the modern world order.

(The Views expressed are that of the author).

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