Father of the Nation Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's achievement as the founder of Pakistan, dominates everything else he did in his long and crowded public life spanning some 42 years. Yet, by any standard, his was an eventful life, his personality multidimensional and his achievements in other fields were many, if not equally great. Indeed, several were the roles he had played with distinction: at one time or another, he was one of the greatest legal luminaries India had produced during the first half of the century, an `ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity, a great constitutionalist, a distinguished parliamentarian, a top-notch politician, an indefatigable freedom-fighter, a dynamic Muslim leader, a political strategist and, above all one of the great nation-builders of modern times. What, however, makes him so remarkable is the fact that while similar other leaders assumed the leadership of traditionally well-defined nations and espoused their cause, or led them to freedom, he created a nation out of an inchoate and down-trodden minority and established a cultural and national home for it. And all that within a decade. For over three decades before the successful culmination in 1947, of the Muslim struggle for freedom in the South-Asian subcontinent, Jinnah had provided political leadership to the Indian Muslims: initially as one of the leaders, but later, since 1947, as the only prominent leader- the Quaid-i-Azam. For over thirty years, he had guided their affairs; he had given expression, coherence and direction to their legitimate aspirations and cherished dreams; he had formulated these into concrete demands; and, above all, he had striven all the while to get them conceded by both the ruling British and the numerous Hindus the dominant segment of India's population. And for over thirty years he had fought, relentlessly and inexorably, for the inherent rights of the Muslims for an honorable existence in the subcontinent. Indeed, his life story constitutes, as it were, the story of the rebirth of the Muslims of the subcontinent and their spectacular rise to nationhood, phoenixlike.phoenixlike.

Born on December 25, 1876, in a prominent mercantile family in Karachi and educated at the Sindh Madrassat-ul-Islam and the Christian Mission School at is birth place, Jinnah joined the Lincoln's Inn in 1893 to become the youngest Indian to be called to the Bar, three years later. Starting out in the legal profession with nothing to fall back upon except his native ability and determination, young Jinnah rose to prominence and became Bombay's most successful lawyer, as few did, within a few years. Once he was firmly established in the legal profession, Jinnah formally entered politics in 1905 from the platform of the Indian National Congress. He went to England in that year along with Gopal Krishna Gokhale (1866-1915), as a member of a Congress delegation to plead the cause of Indian self-government during the British elections. A year later, he served as Secretary to Dadabhai Noaroji (1825-1917), the then Indian National Congress President, which was considered a great honor for a budding politician. Here, at the Calcutta Congress session (December 1906), he also made his first political speech in support of the resolution on self-government.

Three years later, in January 1910, Jinnah was elected to the newly-constituted Imperial Legislative Council. All through his parliamentary career, which spanned some four decades, he was probably the most powerful voice in the cause of Indian freedom and Indian rights. Jinnah, who was also the first Indian to pilot a private member's Bill through the Council, soon became a leader of a group inside the legislature. Mr. Montagu (1879-1924), Secretary of State for India, at the close of the First World War, considered Jinnah "perfect mannered, impressive-looking, armed to the teeth with dialectics..."Jinnah, he felt, "is a very clever man, and it is, of course, an outrage that such a man should have no chance of running the affairs of his own country."

For about three decades since his entry into politics in 1906, Jinnah passionately believed in and assiduously worked for Hindu-Muslim unity. Gokhale, the foremost Hindu leader before Gandhi, had once said of him, "He has the true stuff in him and that freedom from all sectarian prejudice which will make him the best ambassador of Hindu-Muslim Unity: And, to be sure, he did become the architect of Hindu-Muslim Unity: he was responsible for the Congress-League Pact of 1916, known popularly as Luck now Pact- the only pact ever signed between the two political organizations, the Congress and the All-India Muslim League, representing, as they did, the two major communities in the subcontinent.

The Congress-League scheme embodied in this pact was to become the basis for the Montagu-Chemlsford Reforms, also known as the Act of 1919. In retrospect, the Luckhnow Pact represented a milestone in the evolution of Indian politics. For one thing, it conceded Muslims the right to separate electorate, reservation of seats in the legislatures and weightage in representation both at the Centre and the minority provinces. Thus, their retention was ensured in the next phase of reforms. For another, it represented a tacit recognition of the All-India Muslim League as the representative organization of the Muslims, thus strengthening the trend towards Muslim individuality in Indian politics. And to Jinnah goes the credit for all this. Thus, by 1917, Jinnah came to be recognized among both Hindus and Muslims as one of India's most outstanding political leaders. Not only was he prominent in the Congress and the Imperial Legislative Council, he was also the President of the All-India Muslim League and that of the Bombay Branch of the Home Rule League. More importantly, because of his key-role in the Congress-League entente at Luckhnow, he was hailed as the ambassador, of Hindu-Muslim unity.

**Constitutional Struggle**

In subsequent years, however, he felt dismayed at the injection of violence into politics. Since Jinnah stood for "ordered progress", moderation, gradualism and constitutionalism, he felt that political violence was not the pathway to national liberation but, the dark alley to disaster and destruction.

In the ever-growing frustration among the masses caused by colonial rule, there was ample cause for extremism. But, Gandhi's doctrine of non-cooperation, Jinnah felt, even as Rabindranath Tagore(1861-1941) did also feel, was at best one of negation and despair: it might lead to the building up of resentment, but nothing constructive. Hence, he opposed tooth and nail the tactics adopted by Gandhi to exploit the Khilafat and wrongful tactics in the Punjab in the early twenties. On the eve of its adoption of the Gandhian programmed, Jinnah warned the Nagpur Congress Session (1920): "you are making a declaration (of Swaraj within a year) and committing the Indian National Congress to a programme, which you will not be able to carry out". He felt that there was no short-cut to independence and that any extra-constitutional methods could only lead to political violence, lawlessness and chaos, without bringing India nearer to the threshold of freedom.

The future course of events was not only to confirm Jinnah's worst fears, but also to prove him right. Although Jinnah left the Congress soon thereafter, he continued his efforts towards bringing about a Hindu-Muslim entente, which he rightly considered "the most vital condition of Swaraj". However, because of the deep distrust between the two communities as evidenced by the country-wide communal riots, and because the Hindus failed to meet the genuine demands of the Muslims, his efforts came to naught. One such effort was the formulation of the Delhi Muslim Proposals in March, 1927. In order to bridge Hindu-Muslim differences on the constitutional plan, these proposals even waived the Muslim right to separate electorate, the most basic Muslim demand since 1906, which though recognized by the Congress in the Luckhnow Pact, had again become a source of friction between the two communities. surprisingly though, the Nehru Report (1928), which represented the Congress-sponsored proposals for the future constitution of India, negated the minimum Muslim demands embodied in the Delhi Muslim Proposals.

In vain Jinnah argued at the National Convention of Congress in 1928 that "What we want is that Hindus and Mussalmans should march together until our objective is achieved...These two communities have got to be reconciled and united and made to feel that their interests are common". The Convention's blank refusal to accept Muslim demands represented the most devastating setback to Jinnah's life-long efforts to bring about Hindu-Muslim unity, it meant "the last straw" for the Muslims, and "the parting of the ways" for him, as he confessed to a Parsee friend at that time. Jinnah's disillusionment at the course of politics in the subcontinent prompted him to migrate and settle down in London in the early thirties. He was, however, to return to India in 1934, at the pleadings of his co-religionists, and assume their leadership. But, the Muslims presented a sad spectacle at that time. They were a mass of disgruntled and demoralized men and women, politically disorganized and destitute of a clear-cut political programme.