

Lecture 8
Pak301

ALLAMA IQBAL's Presidential Address
December 1930

Dr Allama Muhammad Iqbal ranks amongst the Muslim intellectuals who left a deep impact on history. He inspired Muslims of the Sub-Continent and beyond. He infused a moving spirit and identity in the Indian Muslims. He presented a framework of their political future and talked how that would help to achieve the goal of Ummah. He presented a vision and dream in his Allahabad Address.

1: Background

The Hindu-Muslim question had great importance and stood crucial to British Indian history after 1857, especially in the 20th century. To Muslims, the key issue remained 'separate identity.' They tried their level best to make the rival nations understand that the Muslims are a separate nation having different culture and civilization, interests and rights. The Two Nations theory could not fascinate the Hindus and the British peoples because they believed in 'territorial nationalism.' The Hindus desired to absorb them in their majority but they could not face the arguments of the Muslim intellectuals. By 1930, Muslims had developed a sense of identity and political demands. Iqbal delivered his Presidential address in this background.

Iqbal's stay in Europe, 1905-08, helped to crystallize his thoughts. He returned to India in 1908 and started work on the roots of Muslim decline and the mechanism to uplift the Muslims. He reminded them to follow the teachings of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) practically as the ideal leader. He emphasized on the ideals, teachings and principles of Islam. He sought salvation through Islam. He was awarded with many prominent social positions:

- Title of Sir was conferred in 1922
- Member Punjab Legislative Council (1927-1930)

He delivered lectures on Islam in Aligarh, Hyderabad and Madras (1928-29). At Allahabad, he presided over the meeting and delivered his famous address.

The Address, December 1930

Iqbal presented a review of the political and social situation of India and solution of the ills befalling India. He evaluated the importance of role of Islam in the lives of Muslims of British India. He said that the European view of duality of religion and state does not apply here in the Indian society. Rejecting the secularism he said, religion is not a totally personal affair.

He explained that Islam offers an ethical order, socio-political structure, legal framework, code of life, culture and civilization. It is a living, dynamic force that has a profound impact on the lives of Indian Muslims. With the force of Islam the scattered and disoriented people have been turned into an organized force.

The Muslims are not willing to submerge their religious individuality. They have lack of trust, fear of domination from Hindus. If the British want any sort of internal harmony it would be impossible unless the communal question is settled. It's historical reality that India is a continent inhabited by diverse people. No political arrangement may be acceptable without recognizing this reality.

- If the Muslims have an opportunity to develop in accordance with their Islamic civilization and tradition, they would be willing to sacrifice their lives for India.
- Federalism cannot succeed without recognizing the national identity of the Muslims.

- Territorial redistribution of British India on the basis of religion has become a need of time.
- Punjab, NWFP, Sind and Balochistan be amalgamated into a state, self government within the British empire or without it. The formation of such a consolidated North Western Muslim state appears to be the final destiny of the Muslims, at least of North West India. To India, it will offer peace and security due to internal balance of power.
- Islam is a people building force in India that has given moral consciousness and political identity to the people.

Importance

Iqbal's address is a forceful and logical presentation of the Muslim case in India. Why should they be treated as a political entity rather than a minority?

- Territorial adjustments will enable the Muslims to develop themselves in accordance with their ideals and serve the cause of Ummah.
- Redistribution of territory developed later on concept of Muslim homeland.
- He further expressed these ideas in LETTERS TO JINNAH from May 1936 to November 1937. He talked of a separate federation of Muslim provinces. The North Western India and Bengal can be considered as entitled to self-determination like other nations in India and outside. Shariah's development is impossible without a free Muslim state or states. He advised the Muslims to be above self-interest and devote themselves to Islam.
- In difficult times, Islam has saved the Muslims.
- Faith, culture and historical traditions are more important than patriotism.