

# Iqbal's Concept of Muslim Nationalism and an Independent Muslim State

- He emphasized that the Muslim demand for the creation of a Muslim India within the Indian subcontinent is perfectly justified.
- It was only after affirming this idea of a separate State that Iqbal referred to a federal scheme community for India, basing the formation of autonomous regions on linguistic and economic community.
- While clarifying the nature of conflict between nationalism and Islam, Iqbal wrote to Jawaharlal Nehru: Nationalism in the sense of love of one's country and even readiness to die for its honor is a part of the Muslim's faith.
- It comes into conflict with Islam only when it begins to play the role of a political concept and claims to be a principle of human solidarity demanding that Islam should recede to the background of a mere private opinion and cease to be a living factor in the national life.
- Nehru accused two Muslims of telling a gathering at house of commons London to emphasize that it was impossible to govern India except British ;while Iqbal said that it will be unfair and unjust to say so and No Indian can believe for a moment that it is impossible to govern India, except by British agency.
- In conclusion Iqbal then put a straight question to Nehru: "How is India's problem to be solved if the majority community will neither concede the minimum safeguards necessary for the protection of a minority of 80 million people nor accept the award of a third party: but continue to talk of a kind of nationalism which works out only to its own benefit?"
- "Either the Indian majority community will have to accept for itself the permanent position of an agent of British imperialism in the East or the country will have to be redistributed on a basis of religious, historical and

cultural affinities so as to do away with the question of electorates and the communal problem in its present form."

- Iqbal did not see any contradiction in his long-held view against territorial nationalism and his famous demand for a separate homeland for Indian Muslims. He felt both were complementary to each other.
- "Nationalism in the sense of one's country and even readiness to die for its honor is a part of the Muslim's faith." Iqbal cited examples of the law of Islam for freedom of the 'People of the Book' stating that in countries where Muslims are in the majority, Islam accommodates nationalism.
- For there Islam and nationalism are practically identical; in minority countries it is justifiable to seeking self-determination as a cultural unit." In either case he thought there was no inconsistency.
- Iqbal proceeded to inform Nehru that nationalism was a problem for Muslims only in those countries where they were in the minority (such as India): "In majority countries Islam accommodates nationalism for their Islam and nationalism are practically identical.
- Indian Muslims allowed themselves to be Indianized and influenced by their Hindu neighbors in several spheres. But they never made any compromise in their ideological orientation and stuck firmly to the anchor of their Islamic heritage.
- Thus, when Iqbal pleaded for the establishment of a separate Muslim State in India, he was not advocating the creation of yet another independent territorial unit in the sub-continent. What he emphasized in his address was that the life of Islam as a cultural force in India very largely depended on its centralization in a specified territory.
- The driving force behind the concept of Indian Muslim nationhood was, therefore, essentially ideological in character. It was not merely a question of establishing a State but of giving Islam a political and territorial expression.

The political ideology of separate homeland, as elaborated by Iqbal, was

deeply rooted in the Islamic values contained in the Quranic teachings, and the traditions (Sunnah) of the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH).

- Iqbal not only visualized the destined geographical boundaries of the State of his dream, he also laid down broad guidelines for the future leaders of this State in the same presidential address. What he repeatedly emphasized was his wish that the establishment of this new State 'will intensify their [ the Muslims'] sense of responsibility and deepen their patriotic feeling." Thus Iqbal's efforts for the establishment of an independent Muslim State materialized when Pakistan came into being on August 14, 1947 under the dynamic leadership of Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah.