

Jinnah's Two Nations Theory

Introduction-

Muhammad Ali Jinnah was born December 25, 1876, in Karachi, Undivided India . At the time of his birth, Jinnah's official name was Mahomedali Jinnahbhai. When Muhammad Ali Jinnah was 6 years old, his father placed him in the Sindh Madrasatul-Islam School. Jinnah's parents then enrolled him in the Christian Missionary Society High School. Then Jinnah left for London to study law. In addition to fulfilling his formal studies, Jinnah made frequent visits to the House of Commons, where he could observe the powerful British government in action firsthand. When Jinnah passed his legal exam in May of 1896, he was the youngest ever to have been accepted to the bar. With his law degree in hand, in August 1896 Jinnah moved to Bombay and set up a law practice as a barrister in Bombay's high court.

Jinnah: As Politician-

During Jinnah's visits to the House of Commons, he had developed a growing interest in politics, deeming it a more glamorous field than law. Jinnah was particularly interested in the politics of India and its lack of strong representation in British Parliament. He was inspired when he saw Dadabhai Naoroji become the first Indian to earn a seat in the House of Commons. In 1904, Jinnah attended a meeting of the Indian National Congress. In 1906 he joined the congress himself. In 1912, Jinnah attended a meeting of the All India Muslim League, prompting him to join the league the following year, 1913. As a member of Congress, Jinnah at first collaborated with Hindu leaders as their Ambassador of Hindu Muslim Unity, while working with the Muslim League simultaneously. Gradually, Jinnah realized that the Hindu leaders of Congress held a political agenda that was incongruent with his own. Earlier he had been aligned with their opposition to separate electorates meant to guarantee a fixed percentage of legislative representation for Muslims and Hindus. But few years later, Jinnah shifted to the opposite view

and began supporting separate electorates. At that stage of his political career, Jinnah left Congress and dedicated himself more fully to the Muslim League.

Jinnah: Two Nations Theory-

The Bhakti movement, Deen-e-Ilahi and other similar ideologies, which tried to absorb Islam into Hinduism, prompted Muslim scholars to attempt to preserve the purity of Islam. After the British occupation of the subcontinent, the domination by Hindus, backwardness of Muslims and the threat for their survival, coupled with sporadic clashes between Hindus and Muslims led to the two-nation theory. As time passed in the Indian National Movement, communal violence erupted between Hindus and Muslims. These instances of hatred made Jinnah think a vital fact: achieving Hindu-Muslim unity would become complicated and eventually impracticable. One such action was the Nehru Report of 1928 that refused to give separate electorate to the Muslims and allowed reservations for them only in areas where Muslims were a minority. Jinnah was thus drawn towards the Muslim League and demanded more rights and opportunities for the Muslim community.

The two-nation theory was a concept that emphasised a separate state for the Muslims in the subcontinent. Jinnah's Two Nation Theory harped on three crucial attributes. First, he believed that the Hindus and Muslims inhabiting the vast subcontinent are not two communities but should be considered as two nations in many aspects. Secondly, Hinduism and Islam are not two religions in the strict sense of the term, but different and distinct social orders. Hence they are incompatible to each other requiring a separate territory for their existence. Finally, Hindus and Muslims follow two contrasting religious philosophies having two distinct lineages. They cannot co-exist as a community since they follow two different strands of thought. The theory describes Muslims as a nation, with different culture, heritage, values and civilisation. By 1939 Jinnah came to believe in a Muslim homeland on the Indian subcontinent. In Jinnah's own words, "we (Muslims) are a nation with our own distinctive culture and civilization, language and literature, art and architecture and calendar, history and traditions, aptitudes and in short we have our own distinctive outlook on life and of life". According to Jinnah, Hindus and Muslims were not able to live together therefore

Jinnah's vision was that Muslims should have an independent state where they can practice their religion feely and live peacefully.

The Two Nations Theory: Result-

According to Stanley Wolpert "Few individuals significantly alter the course of history, fewer still modify the map of the world. Hardly any one can be credited with creating a nation state and Muhammad Ali Jinnah did all three". The Indian National Congress wanted India to remain united as a secular state with equality for followers of all religions. But Muslim leaders like Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Chaudhari Rehmat Ali and Allama Iqbal became advocates of the demand of creation of the new domain for Muslims called 'Pakistan'. The skeleton of the 'Two Nation Theory' rendered life in the Allahabad Session of 1930 and Lahore Session of 1940 of the Muslim League – the common demand in both the sessions being, the demand for a separate province for the Muslim fraternity. In Jinnah's own words, "Hindus and Muslims belong to two different religious philosophies, social customs and literary traditions. They neither intermarry nor eat together, and indeed they belong to two different civilisations which are based mainly on conflicting ideas and conceptions." So, "It is a dream that the Hindus and Muslims can ever evolve a common nationality," he added. Under total support of Muslim League and Jinnah Hindu-Muslim riots and severe violence erupted in pre-independent India. Their agenda was clear "Larke Lenge Pakistan" (we must gain Pakistan through fighting). So, the Freedom of India was sealed with a curse – the Curse of the Partition which divided the unified nation into India and Pakistan. Jinnah and his Two Nations Theory is explicitly considered responsible for the unwarranted 'Partition'.

Conclusion-

Jinnah's Two Nations Theory was and is considered responsible for many religious violence, riots in pre-independent India , Independent India and Pakistan. In Pakistan , Soon after Jinnah's death, the countrymen succumbed to the centrifugal forces of religious intolerance unleashed by the notion that Muslims were so different from Hindus that they constituted

a nation of their own. Jinnah's assumption of "one unified nation for Muslims" was proved to be wrong when the majority of Muslim population of Indian subcontinent decided to stay in India after partition. Pakistan itself got divided in 1971 in the form of Bangladesh. Some historians like H M Seervai and Ayesha Jalal assert that Jinnah never wanted partition—it was the outcome of the Congress leaders being unwilling to share power with the Muslim League. It is asserted that Jinnah only used the Pakistan demand as a method to mobilise support to obtain significant political rights for Muslims. Jinnah has gained the admiration of major Indian nationalist politicians like Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Lal Krishna Advani—the latter's comments praising Jinnah caused an uproar in his own Bharatiya Janata Party. The scenario of now is , most of the Pakistanis still worship him as "Quaid-e-Azam" (Greatest Leader) or "Baba-e-Azam" (Father of the Nation) and most of the Indians blame Jinnah for 'collusively' partitioning India on the basis of religion.