All India Jam’iyyat Ulama-i-Islam: Religio-Political Activism and Pakistan Movement (1945-1947)

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Abstract
Historically, ulama played a key role in the politics of subcontinent. The contribution AIJUI is a settle fact. Its role increased with the passage of time and when they took an active part in the Pakistan movement. They worked with the Muslim league. During the 1945-46 elections they convinced the Muslim of subcontinent to vote for Muslim league and Pakistan. In the referendum of NWFP and Selhet they also convinced the people to give their option in the favor of Pakistan. Keeping in view its contribution in the freedom struggle, the paper is an attempt to highlight their contribution for the cause of Pakistan.

Keywords: AIJUI, Muslim League, Congress, Political Activism

I. Retrospect

The Lahore Resolution 1940 can be termed as ‘water-shed’ in the history of Muslim political struggle which, in turn issued a road-map for a coveted separate homeland for Muslims of the subcontinent. No doubt it resulted into an immense increase in the popularity of All India Muslim League (est. 1906), hidden in the emphasis on Islamic ideas laid time and again by its leaders. Muslim masses were enchanted by the idea of Pakistan and this showed their interest and beliefs in their loyalty. They wanted to set up such a society that was based on real Islam. M.A. Jinnah announced that the system of Government in Pakistan would be based on Qur’an and Sunnah which gave a new impetus and spirit to the whole nation. Addressing a gathering on 1st February 1943, Jinnah said that “Islam is not only a religion but it is a complete code of life. All issues of Muslim Ummah whether these are social, political or economical are solved and decided under the light of Islam. We will solve all the issues regarding any department of life according to Islamic teachings”.

This was not an end; a number of examples can be quoted from Jinnah’s addresses in which he assured to implement Qur’an and Sunnah in the new state to be established. Having trust on all this, the Muslims came to the conclusion that to have Islam in their individual as well as collective life, establishment of Pakistan was the only option left before them.

At the end of 1944 and beginning of 1945, Liaquat Ali Khan and some other leaders from AIML visited Southern India. At every spot Liaquat Ali Khan assured people that Pakistan would be a ‘laboratory for practical Islam’. He said that supremacy of
Islamic principles would be made crystal clear by acting upon these. This stance of Muslim League gathered a lot of support from the ulama’s quarters who had become disappointed from the politics and policies of the Indian National Congress (hereafter Congress).

II. Prelude to the Religio-Political Activism of All India Jam’iyyat Ulama-i-Islam

Maulana Shabbir Ahmed Uthmani, one of the leading scholars from Dar-ul-Uloom Deoband, having a deep study of Indian politics reached to the conclusion that the Congress was a Hindu organization due to anti-Muslim and dual policies of Hindus. He was also fed up from the pro-Congress attitude of Jam’iyyat Ulama-i-Hind (hereafter JUH); hence he denied participating into its Saharanpur Session 4-7 May 1945 and later on resigned from Jam’iyyat Ulama-i-Hind once for all. He made himself busy in teaching and learning. It was a crucial time for Pakistan Movement (1940-47) on the account that a considerable number of political parties, both big and small, were against the partition of India and the formation of Pakistan. Prominent among them were Congress, Jam’iyyat Ulama-i-Hind, Shia Conference, Momin Conference, Majlis-i-Ahrar, Jama’at-i-Islami, Muslim Parliamentary Board, Sunny Board, Khudai Khidmatgar, Anjuman Watan Baluchistan, Tehrik-e-Khaksar, Independent Party Behar and Unionist Party. They were supporting Congress directly or indirectly for their personal vested interests. On the other hand, British Government became hollow as a result of the World War II (1939-1945). When the War ended with British victory, the Viceroy of India Lord Vawel announced on 21 August 1945 that elections would be held at the end of the year and that the Government would hold talks with local leaders to grant freedom. These elections were very important and decisive for Muslim League. It had to prove that it was the only representative of Muslims of India and the Congress, Jam’iyyat and Ahrar had no right or claim to represent Muslims. With the approach of 1945-46 Elections, the claim of Muslim League to be the only representative of Muslims of India was questioned by Jam’iyyat Ulama-e-Hind, both politically and religiously. The leaders of the League, mainly from the elite quarters of India noticed that ulama had no soft corner for them and without winning their hearts the success in election seemed difficult. Moreover, ulama did not show unity among their ranks in favor of Pakistan and two-nation theory despite the fact that they were in large numbers. However the situation was not totally hopeless. A number of ulama from different schools of thought were supporting AIML; for example ulama from Deoband including Maulana Shabbir Ahmed Uthmani, Mufit Muhammad Shafi and Zafar Ahmad Uthmani supported Muslim League’s view point and even left their parent organization Dar-ul-Uloom Deoband in the wake of difference of opinion on the issue of supporting Muslim League. They decided to propagate Muslim League’s view point and issue Fatwa (religious decrees) to declare cooperation with Congress as haram [unlawful] and stressed upon Muslim League to make arrangements for the publication of these Fatwa.

The continuity and consolidation of ulama’s efforts was the call of the time and ulama form Deoband School responded well in time which resulted into the formation of the ‘Jam’iyyat Ulama-i-Islam’ Calcutta on 11 July 1945 under the President ship of Allama Azad Subhani. This effort was equally applauded by Allama Shabbir Ahmad
Khalil Ahmed, Shahid Hassan Rizvi

Uthmani who wrote a letter from Bait-ul-Fazal Deoband on October 16, 1945. He, in response to a letter, wrote:

No doubt, it is a critical period for the Muslim Ummah. Political resentment has acquired much importance. No such confusing situation has been there before. The sorriest state of affairs is that one opponent is happy to see internal contradiction among big and small Muslim parties. They are using this as an effective tool. Our internal differences have reached the level of enmity. Only Allah has the powers to change the minds and make focus attention of all, from every side to Islamic point of view.¹²

This impetus of Allama Uthmani was reinforced by a number of like-minded ulama, who, in turn, decided to establish a central effective organization. Resultantly, they held a grand conference in collaboration with Jam’iyyat Ulama-e-Bangala and Jam’iyyat Ulama-i-Islam Calcutta at Muhammad Ali Park Calcutta; while the organizational expenses were met by two Local Merchants, S.M. Hameed and Seith Razzaq. Khawaja Nazim-u-Din and Hussain Shaheed Soharwardi were assigned to supervise all the matters and AIML helped to bring Ulama and Scholars to Calcutta. The conference continued 26 to 29 October 1945 at Calcutta which eventually resulted into the establishment of Kul Hind Ulama-e-Islam (All India Jam’iyyat Ulama-i-Islam; hereafter AIJUI),¹³ Maulana Shabbir Ahmed Uthmani was elected its President of Jam’iyyat Ulama-i-Islam in absentia, Maulana Zafar Ali Uthmani as Vice President, Maulana Sayyid Quresh Shamsi as its General Secretary. Maulana Raghib Ahsan presented the welcome address Maulana Zafar Ahmad Uthmani presided over the meeting.¹⁴ Maulana Shabbir Ahmad Uthmani Message was read by Maulana Muhammad Mateen. In this message the Muslims were insisted to support and help Muslim League. He stated that if Muslim League failed at that time, Muslims would have no chance to grow up in the country for a long time. They were supporting Muslim League to preserve our Deen and to protect our nationality. They wanted to see the voice of ulama dominating all spheres of life. They wanted to make Muslim League free from all such elements which are hindrance in imposing Islamic system of life.¹⁵ Daily Asar-e-Jadid published in detail the aims and objectives of AIJUI with detail of conference in its October 30, 1945 publication.¹⁶

The establishment of AIJUI gave boost to Pakistan Movement. Jam’iyyat Ulama-i-Islam announced to support Muslim League and the idea of Pakistan in its first meeting. In the beginning Quaid’s advisor for religious affairs was Nawab Bahadar Yar Jang but later on he was replaced by Maulana Shabbir Ahmed Uthmani.¹⁷ Jinnah had a great love and respect for the members of AIJUI and this confidence remained intact till his death. Maulana said that Jinnah was the only one among Muslims who was well aware of ups and downs of current politics. He could never be bought he would never surrender before any pressure.¹⁸

III. AIJUI and the General Elections 1945-46

As the elections approached, resentment between Muslim League and Congress reached its climax. Ulama and men of letters worked for Pakistan Movement from the platform of Muslim League and Jam’iyyat Ulama-i-Islam.¹⁹ All India Jam’iyyat Ulama-i-Islam became like an Islamic Movement and front line of an Islamic army in a battlefield. Its popularity set the member of Jam’iyyat Ulama-i-Hind surprised. Allama Uthmani started a series of explanatory letters on topics like partition of India, Jinnah Muslim
League, Pakistan and Pakistan Movement. Allama Uthmani delivered explicit answer to the question of objection raising people in Marasalat-i-Sayaseya [political letters].

It was a time of climax of election of 1945-46. In the mean while passion for achievement of Pakistan had become a compulsory part of heart beat of almost every Indian Muslim. At that time no leader or party could think of betrayal from the demand. Jawaher Lal Nehro, a leader of Congress addressed a great gathering at Lakhnow on 9 September 1945. He said that if they decided to contest elections, they would do so with great preparations. If anyone would oppose them, they would crush. They would not come to any treaty on basic principles. They knew how to fight and that they had fought against the British Government.

Pandit Nehro was proud of his contemptual force and Jinnah had faith in Allah. Nehru's announcement was replied unequivocally by Jinnah on 19 October 1945. In his speech, he said that if the government and Congress would not use unfair means, Muslim League will succeed with heavy mandate. He said that Congress was trying to disburse the people through money, but our God is with us and we will succeed in sha Allah [by the grace of Almighty Allah].

The JUH spent all its force and effort to oppose Pakistan and to favor Congress. Ulama from Congress were busy in accusing Pakistan, Jinnah and Muslim League. For example they said that Pakistan was the brain child of the British and Muslim League was an agent of the British. They said that British wanted to divide India into pieces under a conspiracy and Muslim Leaguers were their puppets to act upon the conspiracy. They were playing in the hands of the British. They said that the marriage of Jinnah in 1912 with a non-Muslim through civil marriage act still needed a proof to be Muslim. Maulana Hussain Ahmed Madni issued a Fatwa and declared Jinnah as "Kafir-e-Azam" [great infidel] and joining Muslim League by Muslims as unjust and "Haram". This Fatwa was issued from Delhi on 27 October 1945. Allama Shabbir Ahmed Uthmani answered it in detail and said:

No party or person can claim never to commit any mistake. Our eminent sacred institutions have no exception. But this does not mean that joining an institution will be unislamic. Above all other aspirations, if League succeeds to make existence of Muslims felt and their voice, separated from Hindus and British, heard, that would be sufficient. If the world accepts presence of third force in India and both League and Congress are considered equal about any matter about peace or war, the achievement would not be less important from political or Islamic point of view.

Eminent ulama from JUH refuted all the blames with arguments and proved that so called party was itself playing in the hands of Hindus. This attitude of JUH harmed its own credibility and people started to join Muslim League and AIJUI more speedily and in large numbers.

With untiring efforts of AIJUI, a wave of awareness and awakening ran into the masses. The work done by AIJUI in a short span of time could not be done by Congress, Muslim League and JUH in years. In order to develop a consensus, a delegation from JUH including Maulana Hussain Ahmed Madni, Maulana Hefiz-ur-Rahman Seoharvi, Mufti Kifayat Ullah, Maulana Ahmed Saeed, Maulana Abdul Haleem Siddiqui, Maulana Abdul Hannan and Maulana Mufti Ateeq-ur-Rahman came at the house of Allama
Shabbir Ahmed Uthmani on 7 December 1945. The purpose of those negotiations was to remove misunderstanding and deference of opinion. These negotiations continued for three hours and Allama Uthmani made all of them dumb with his arguments about Pakistan. Main points of Allama Shabbir Ahmad Uthmani’s point of view were as follows:

1. The opinion I have formed is based on sincerity. Jam’iyyat ulama-i-Islam may remain firm on it or not, I believe that Pakistan is beneficial for the Muslims.
2. How can an assembly, having 60 to 70% non-Muslim members, decide any matter in the favor of Muslims?
3. Jinnah can never be an agent of British; He neither can be bought nor pressurized.
4. If Pakistan is in the favor of Hindu, why are they so opposed to it?
5. At the end the delegation requested Maulana to be quiet on the issue but Maulana rejected this request saying that he could not remain indifferent to a matter, he thought just.

Allama Shabbir Ahmad Uthmani highlighted different features of Pakistan Scheme. The opposition of Congress Ulama could not withstand it and Pakistan Movement got strength. It became clear to the Muslims being a separate nation from every aspect. A separate country Pakistan was the only guarantee of their safety, progress and prosperity.

It was the influence of AIJUI that people were gathering abundantly under the flag of Muslim League and the Muslims demand of freedom was getting strong. Jinnah’s speeches and writings experienced an evident change due to ulama’s company and their role in Pakistan Movement. In a meeting with Maulana Ghulam Murshid, who was a founding member of AIJUI, had a meeting with Jinnah at Calcutta. During the conversation when Jinnah mentioned Islamic code of life, he showed the latter English translation of Qur’an and reiterated that:

The Book has rules and regulations about military, administration, economics, morality and about almost every sphere of life. The constitution given in Qur’an is complete and Comprehensive. Its roles are unmortal e.g. when Allah says at many places; the punishment of every crime should be as per the intensity and situation. It is an international and immortal principle.

Maulana Murrhid was highly convinced by Jinnah’s religious tendencies. The zeal and zest ulama from AIJUI showed in the elections caused a revolution in Indian politics. AIJUI advocated the point of view that prosperity, survival and implementation of Islamic system was possible with the establishment of Pakistan. Maulana Shabbir Ahmad Uthmani addressed in a great gathering at Deoband on 25 December 1945 and said that he had left politics after Khilafat Movement. After much thinking and pondering he had reached the conclusion that if his blood was needed to achieve Pakistan, it would be a matter of pride for him and he would never hesitate from it. Survival of the Muslims and their honorable life was conditioned with the establishment of Pakistan. He would consider his life successful if it is used for this cause.

Maulana Zafar Ahmad Uthmani and Maulama Mufti Muhammad Shafi toured the whole India including Utter Pradesh (UP), Bihar, Bengal, Punjab, Sindh and Frontier
Province. It was the result of their untiring efforts that common Muslims started to gather under Muslim League flag and they actively participated in the movement. These efforts strengthened the view point of AIML which showed marvelous victory inspite of the severe opposition of Congress and won 428 seats out of 492 in provincial assembly elections. This outstanding success of Muslim League was unexpected and amazing. Even more Muslim league won 75 seats out of 86 Muslim seats in Punjab and defeated the land lords’ Unionist Party which could secure only ten seats. The success in these elections made one thing clear that Muslims of India were in the favor of Muslim League’s policies and in favor of demand for Pakistan. Explaining the wonderful success in election, Jinnah said on 28 January 1946 that Muslims of India had made it clear without any shadow of doubt that the only solution of political problems of India was hidden in the partition of India into Pakistan and Hindustan. At the end Jinnah stressed the British Government and Viceroy to make a clear pronouncement without any delay, about their policy on partition of the subcontinent.

Pakistan Movement got immense strength from the success in 1945-46 elections. This success was the fruit of efforts of scholars, especially from AIJUI who worked day and night and guided the voters towards a track. The track made their mind to even scarify their live for the creation of Pakistan. All this made Congress and ulama from the Congress lick the dust. The marvelous success was the result of ulama and scholars from AIJUI, so when Allama Uthmani congratulated Quaid-i-Azam, he said, “Maulana you deserve the congratulation in reality as the success is fruit of your labour.” Jinnah called the meeting of newly elected assembly members in Delhi on April 9, 1946. The purpose was to take oath and to tell the world in general and British Government in particular that Pakistan was their least and final demand. They would make no compromise over it. Jinnah said in his speech that the Muslims would face every danger, give any sacrifice and go through any situation to achieve independent state and to have Pakistan. He said that the enemies may cause a delay in the process of establishment of Pakistan but they could not stop its formation.

IV. AIJUI and the Promotion of the ‘Pakistan Cause’

All India Jam’iyyat Ulama-i-Islam arranged conference of ulama at different places like Lahore, Hyderabad and Merath etc. The conferences had a great impact. Maulana Uthmani, President of AIJUI Jam’iyyat presided over himself the conferences in Lahore, Bombay and Peshawar. Due to this a large section of people who believed in ulama’s leadership became ready to support the League. On the eve of AIJUI Lahore Conference, Allama Uthmani gave an address named “Our Pakistan” and highlighted all salient features of independent Pakistan. He said:

Remember it, Muslims have been awakened. They have reached their aimed destination. Their target motto is clear and they would not hesitate to lay down their lives and to scarify their wealth during this journey. I advise you time and again, try your level best to make Pakistan and Muslim League, a success. Abolish all to do or die for the Muslims of India.

Not only this, AIJUI leadership supported view point of Muslim League on a number of political ventures made by the British government and the Viceroy. Responding to the Cabinet Mission 1946, Maulana Zafar Ahmad Uthmani, the Vice President AIJUI, sent a telegram to British Cabinet Mission on 18 April 1946 in which he
made it clear that Muslim League was the only representative political party of Muslims of India. AIJUI was on its back and call and demand for Pakistan was their national demand. There was no way to retreat. Muslims were not ready for any compromise and they were not hesitant to give any sacrifice for its achievements. 40

This telegram made it clear to Cabinet Mission that a large number of ulama were with Muslim League and in their claim for Pakistan. Muslim League accepted the Mission Plan in its meeting of 6 June 1946 but announced that in spite of accepting the plan, the claim for a complete independent Pakistan was the only aim of Muslim India and they would use their full force to achieve it.

Muslim League joined interim government along with Congress on the advice of Lord Wavell on 26 October 1946.41 This could not work for long because of belligerent attitude of both Congress and League. They had their own priorities and preferences. In the meantime an abrupt change into the British administrative set up in the subcontinent had grim implications about the future of Muslim India. However, Muslim league was not willing to accept any solution other than the division of India and even the Congress-Viceroy nexus had to face a political defeat. Lord Mount Batten had to announce that till June 1947, power would be shifted to the people of India, and British would leave India by August.42 Mount Batten presented the 3rd June plan to the leaders of India and emphasized for its urgent approval. Frontier and Salhet had to decide through referendum to join Pakistan or India. Jinnah stressed upon Mountbatten to exercise just and impartial division as he himself announced that his mandate was impartiality.43 But Mount Batten and Radcliffe put aside all principles of justice and impartiality, if they had done their job with justice, Pakistan could be safe from Congress and Sikhs’ brutality during 1947 and 1948.

An AIJUI delegation including Allama Shabbir Ahmad Uthmani, Zafar Ahmad Uthmani and Mufti Muhammad Shafi met Jinnah in Delhi on 11 June 1947. Allama Shabbir Ahmad Uthmani congratulated him on the attainment of Pakistan. Jinnah said that they deserved the congratulation as that was result of their efforts.44 The delegation discussed with Jinnah protection of Pakistan and the Muslims, shortage of time and economical problems. Jinnah listened to all that seriously and answered all questions mannerly. After that Jinnah expressed his fears about plebiscite in Salhet and Frontier. He said that if the plebiscite was not in the favor of Pakistan, it would be great loss. Upon that ulama said that the result would be in the favor of Pakistan if he announced that there would be Islamic rule of law in Pakistan. They said that the Muslims from Frontier and Bengal did not consider any political game. They knew Islam only and they could vote only in the name of Islam.45 Upon this, Jinnah said that he was a lawyer of Muslims in Pakistan law-suit. Allah had granted success to Muslims and they had achieved Pakistan. His work and job was over. Muslims had the authority to implement any system. As there was majority of Muslims in Pakistan, there was no other option except, Islamic system and Islamic state.46 Upon this, ulama said, there is also majority of Muslims in Turkey but Mustafa Kamal Pasha has not implemented Islam. Some people have same danger from Muslim League. So give us in black and white that the constitution of Pakistan will be based on Qur’an and Sunnah.47 Jinnah replied that he had announced time and again that Muslims constitution was formulated fourteen hundred year ago. Our constitution would be based on Quranic injunctions. He asked the ulama to make people satisfied that constitution of Pakistan would be Islamic. He said that he had never cheated the nation
and whatever he said, would be implemented. Upon this Allama Shabbir Ahmad Uthmani assured him that by the grace of Allah Salhet and Frontier would be part of Pakistan. He said that he would visit Frontier and Allama Zafar Uthmani would tour Salhat. Jinnah stood up, shaked hand and said that Allah might make you and Pakistan a success.48

Allama Shabbir Ahmad Uthmani stressed upon the Muslims of Frontier that Pakistan would be established very soon and that would be such a state where there would be Islamic rules and laws. Muhammad Ashraf, Head of Arabic Department, Peshawar University writes about the tours of Allama Uthamni and Mufti Muhammad Shafi, “I myself witnessed the Referendum in Frontier Province. I was part of the company. This group of Deobandi thinkers and Pir Manki (late) shattered the magic of Congress and the leadership of Abdul Gaffar Khan in NWFP”.49 In the long run due to the struggle of scholars and ulama, Frontier voted in the favor of Pakistan. This Referendum was held on 6 to 17 July 1947 and the results of were announced on 18 July 1947. Pakistan had a marvelous success with the following figures:

1. Vote for Pakistan: 2,89,244
2. Vote for Hindustan: 2,874
3. Winning Difference: 2,86,370 50

However, in Silhat Congress used all possible unfair means to avert the referendum results and remained successful. Jinnah confessed the services of ulama many times and gave them the true honor when establishment of Pakistan was to be celebrated on 14 August 1947. He, as Government General of Pakistan honored President AIJUI Allema Shabbir Ahmad Uthmani and Maulana Zafar Ahmad Uthmani to hoist the flag. Allama Shabbir Ahmad Uthmani hoisted the flag of Pakistan in Karachi after a short recitation of Holy Qur’an and a short speech. Maulana Zafar Ahmad Uthmani did all the same in Dhaka and announced the inclusion of world largest Islamic state into the line of Islamic Countries.51 This was a matter of prestige for ulama, especially for the leaders of the AIJUI.

V. Conclusion

The All India Jam’iyyat Ulama-i-Islam played an active role in promoting the Pakistan Movement. Especially Allama Shabbir Ahmed Usmani was the outstanding personality who rendered really valuable services for mobilizing and gearing up the movement of Pakistan. He and other noted Ulama and Mashaiikh had a great number of followers spread over the sub-continent, who put their hearts in speeding up movement of separate homeland for the Muslims of the united India. Hence, the services of the Ulama and Mashaikh in the movement of Pakistan proved strong backing and boosted efforts carried out by the Muslims of the sub-continent for a separate Muslim state, where they would spend their lives in accordance with Islamic laws and principles without any fear. Their services included educating their disciples and awakening the general masses to the need of Pakistan for the Muslims of the sub-continent, making physical and personal contacts with the people even in distant areas, convening of public meetings and ingraining the idea of inevitable necessity of an independent country in their minds. Moreover, while complying with the instructions and directions of the Jinnah in strict manner under the able guidance and instructions, the Ulama and Mashaikh spread the message in all corners of the sub-continent, infused the Muslims and worked ceaselessly to achieve the goal.
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*Tameer-i-Pakistan Awr Ulama-i-Rabbani*, p. 129

*Tameer-i-Pakistan Awr Ulama-i-Rabbani*, p. 134

*Tameer-i-Pakistan Awr Ulama-i-Rabbani*, p.120

The term *Kafir-i-Azam*, for Jinnah was used by Ahirai leader Maulana Mazher Ali Azher. After that Congressite Ulama and other peoples also used this word. I. H. Qureshi (1972). *Ulama in Politics*, p. 354

This allegation is totally wrong that Quaid-i-Azam marriages Miss Ratun Bai through civil marriage Act. But before marriage Jinnah asked Rattan Bai to embrace Islam and she openly accepted the sovereignty of God and Islam before the Public 18 April 1918. Mr. Sharif Kanji arranged the Qadi and Muhammad Ali Jinnah got married on 19 April 1918 according to the Islamic traditions. For details see, *Nawa-i-Waqt*, 25 December 2011, p.14