

## THE UNCLAIMED INHERITANCE: QUAID-E-AZAM MUHAMMAD ALI JINNAH AND THE CASE FOR A SECULAR, PLURALIST PAKISTAN

ISHFAQ NAVEED\*

### ABSTRACT

This research article critically examines Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's vision and policies regarding minorities within the emergent political and constitutional framework of Pakistan. Drawing upon archival speeches, constitutional proceedings, contemporary accounts, and legal analyses, this study explores Jinnah's concerted efforts to create an inclusive, democratic, and pluralistic state. His political philosophy, deeply rooted in British-Indian constitutionalism, liberal ethics, and a secular worldview, aimed to transcend the very religious divisions that had necessitated partition. Through a close reading of Jinnah's key speeches—most notably the Constituent Assembly address of 11 August 1947—this paper highlights his unwavering commitment to safeguarding the rights, dignity, and full citizenship of all religious and ethnic minorities. The analysis situates Jinnah's ideals within the broader context of decolonisation and nation-building, arguing that his constitutional and moral imagination offered a coherent model of civic nationalism grounded in justice and participatory citizenship. The study, informed by an archival sensibility, underscores how Jinnah's inclusive vision was deliberately set aside after his death, yet remains a critical point of reference for understanding Pakistan's foundational ideals and its subsequent constitutional and political evolution.

**KEYWORDS:** Minorities; Nation-Building; Constitutionalism; Archival Discourse; Secularism; Civic Nationalism

---

\* Lecturer, Islamia College Civil Lines, Lahore. Email: [ishfaqgill@gmail.com](mailto:ishfaqgill@gmail.com)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.65463/20>

The creation of Pakistan in 1947 under the leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah marked not only a political separation but also a profound reimagination of nationhood. As the leader of the All-India Muslim League, Jinnah envisioned a state that would safeguard the political, economic, and cultural rights of Muslims within a democratic framework, yet his political and moral philosophy extended far beyond sectarian boundaries. The central, agonising question that has dominated the historiography of Pakistan is the intended nature of the state itself. Was it to be a modern Islamic republic, where religious identity was the paramount legal and social marker, or a secular, liberal democracy that offered refuge and equality to all its citizens, regardless of creed? Archival evidence—from speeches, letters, legal documents, and assembly records—reveals that one of the defining and most consistent aspects of Jinnah's leadership was his unwavering commitment to the protection and total integration of minorities within the new state.

I propose that a systematic archival reappraisal demonstrates Jinnah's vision was unequivocally for a secular, democratic, and constitutional state grounded in a model of civic nationalism, not religious exclusion. This essay argues that Jinnah's political philosophy, shaped by a lifetime of British-Indian constitutionalism, saw the protection of all minorities not as a magnanimous concession, but as the fundamental test of a civilised state. His famous address of 11 August 1947 was not an anomaly, a Freudian slip, or a tactical concession, as many critics and even some apologists suggest. It was, instead, the philosophical capstone of his entire political career, the logical and final expression of a worldview he had championed for forty years. This larger debate over Jinnah's "real" intentions is not merely academic; it remains the central, unresolved political and ideological conflict

within Pakistan today, making a return to the primary-source archive more urgent than ever.

To substantiate this claim, this study will trace the contours of Jinnah's thought and actions. I will first survey the key scholarly literature that has framed the debate between the "secular" and "Islamic" interpretations of Jinnah's intent, introducing legal and socio-political analyses. Following this, I will outline the specific archival methodology employed, which privileges a close, contextual reading of primary-source documents. The main body of the essay will then be divided into several thematic sections: first, a detailed analysis of Jinnah's formative political philosophy as a constitutionalist, his break with Congress, and his role as an "ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity"; second, an exploration of his specific, documented alliances with non-Muslim minority communities during the Pakistan Movement; third, a deep archival deconstruction of his foundational speeches and actions in 1947; fourth, a critical examination of the "great deviation" from this vision, the Objectives Resolution of 1949; and fifth, a reappraisal of Jinnah's secularism against counter-arguments of his own religious rhetoric.

The scholarly debate over Jinnah's vision for Pakistan is vast and deeply polarised, broadly falling into two camps. The first is the more classical, and at times hagiographical, school that presents Jinnah as the determined, single-minded founder of a homeland for Indian Muslims. Stanley Wolpert's (1984) *Jinnah of Pakistan* remains a seminal biography, offering an unparalleled, detailed narrative of his life, portraying him as a brilliant, incorruptible, and pragmatic leader who, in the end, embraced the two-nation theory fully. Works like Khalid B. Sayeed's (1968) *Pakistan: The Formative Phase* provide a foundational analysis of the political and

institutional challenges of the new state, accepting the creation of Pakistan as the logical outcome of Jinnah's campaign. I suggest that while these works are essential for understanding the what and how of Pakistan's creation, they often engage less deeply with the ideological tension of Jinnah's simultaneous commitment to Muslim nationalism and secular, inclusive citizenship, often treating the latter as a secondary concern.

The second, "revisionist" school fundamentally challenged this narrative. Ayesha Jalal's (1985) *The Sole Spokesman* stands as the most significant contribution, arguing that Jinnah never actually wanted a "moth-eaten" partitioned state. Instead, she posits, he used the Pakistan demand as a brilliant political strategy, a bargaining chip to secure maximum constitutional rights and power for the Muslim minority within a federated, united India. In this reading, Jinnah's identity as the "sole spokesman" for Muslims was a political tool to gain a seat at the high table with Congress and the British. I argue that Jalal's thesis, while controversial, radically re-frames Jinnah's approach to minorities: if his goal was a power-sharing formula in a united India, then his commitment to constitutional safeguards for all minorities was not a tactic, but the very substance of his demand. Other scholars, like Akbar S. Ahmed (1997), have sought to reconcile Jinnah's modernism with his Islamic identity.

Beyond this central debate, other scholarly streams enrich the conversation. The legal-constitutional school, most forcefully represented by H.M. Seervai (1989), analyses Jinnah's actions through a purely legal lens. Seervai argues that Jinnah was constitutionally and legally correct in his demand for Pakistan, and that his "two-nation theory" was a political and national concept, not a religious one. Seervai's work provides a powerful framework for interpreting the 11th August

speech as a legal, not just moral, pronouncement. Concurrently, socio-political historians like David Gilmartin (1988) and Ian Talbot (2009) have provided nuanced analyses of the Punjab, demonstrating how the political realities on the ground—particularly the power of landed elites and pirs—both shaped and were shaped by Jinnah's high-level negotiations, often forcing him to use religious symbolism that his own liberal instincts may have eschewed. These works provide a crucial check against a purely "great man" theory of history.

Finally, a more contemporary school of thought, represented by historians like Christophe Jaffrelot (2016) and Muhammad Qasim Zaman (2018), examines the consequences of these competing visions. They trace the rise of religious nationalism and sectarianism in Pakistan after Jinnah, analysing how and why the "Islamic" narrative gained state sanction. These works are vital for understanding the "great deviation," contextualising the Objectives Resolution and subsequent constitutional changes as products of a political power-play by a state elite that, lacking Jinnah's popular authority, turned to the ulema for legitimacy. My research engages all these schools, using the archival-hermeneutic approach to test their claims against the primary-source record of Jinnah's own words.

This study employs a historical-analytical methodology, rooted in what I term an "archival reappraisal." The core method is a close, contextual reading (or hermeneutic) of primary source documents from the 1910s through the 1940s. I argue that by centring the archival record—the textual evidence of what was said, written, and debated at the time—we can cut through the subsequent decades of ideological "retrofitting" where Jinnah's vision has been claimed by secularists, religious fundamentalists, and the military establishment alike. This approach

moves beyond simply citing his 11th August speech as "proof" and instead situates it within a consistent, decades-long archival continuum of Jinnah's own words and political actions. This methodology is not about psycho-analysing Jinnah's "true" beliefs, but about analysing the political and constitutional framework he publicly and consistently proposed.

To execute this, the research draws from several key archives. The primary source base includes the published Speeches and Statements of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah (Jinnah 1948) and the Letters of Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah (e.g., Zaidi 1976), which contain his public addresses, press conferences, and private correspondence. This is supplemented by the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan Debates (1947-1949), which provide the verbatim records of his 11th August address and, just as importantly, the debates on the Objectives Resolution after his death. Furthermore, I draw from collections of Muslim League documents, particularly Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada's (ed.) *Foundations of Pakistan*, to analyse the language of the Lahore Resolution. Contemporary press accounts, particularly from Dawn (the League's official paper), are used to capture the public-facing articulation of his vision. This primary evidence is then contextualised using the secondary scholarly sources, allowing this study to place its archival findings directly into conversation with the ongoing historiographical debate.

### JINNAH'S FORMATIVE CONSTITUTIONALISM

It is impossible to understand Jinnah's vision for minorities in 1947 without first analysing the archival record of his entire political career, which began not as a Muslim separatist, but as a "profoundly Indian nationalist"

(Wolpert 1984, 38). His formative years were spent in the Indian National Congress, where his fastidious, legalistic, and constitutional approach earned him the mentorship of moderate leaders like Gopal Krishna Gokhale, who famously dubbed him the "best ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity." This early phase of his career was defined by a belief that India's path to self-rule lay in a united front, where Hindu and Muslim interests could be reconciled through constitutional and legal safeguards.

His greatest achievement in this period, the Lucknow Pact of 1916, was a testament to this philosophy. It was a joint agreement between the Congress and the Muslim League that established separate electorates for Muslims but within a framework of a united, self-governing India. I argue that the Pact is the first major piece of archival evidence of Jinnah's method: he was not a populist, but a negotiator, and his tools were not religious fatwas, but legal clauses. The Pact itself was a meticulously drafted constitutional document, a contract between two political entities, which Jinnah, as the broker, saw as the only path to a stable, pluralistic future (Sayeed 1968, 84).

This deeply ingrained constitutionalism, learned as a barrister at Lincoln's Inn, defined his political character. Jinnah was, above all, a parliamentarian who believed in the rule of law, due process, and the separation of powers. This ideological commitment is precisely why he broke with both the Congress and, later, other Muslim movements. His departure from Congress was solidified after the 1920 Nagpur session. He was repulsed by Mahatma Gandhi's new strategy of non-cooperation, viewing it as an extra-constitutional, populist mass movement that, in his view, dangerously mixed religion and politics (Wolpert 1984, 69). He saw this as a "spiritualisation of politics" that would lead to mob

rule rather than the ordered, legal path to freedom he championed. This break is a crucial piece of archival evidence, demonstrating his aversion to religious-led politics.

This same aversion informed his opposition to the Khilafat Movement in the early 1920s. While many Muslim leaders, including members of the League, joined this pan-Islamic campaign to protect the Ottoman Caliphate, Jinnah stood aloof. He saw it, correctly, as a movement based on religious romanticism that had no bearing on the practical, constitutional problems facing Muslims in India (Wolpert 1984, 72). His political vision was focused on the empirical and the legal, not the theological or the romantic. His consistency in opposing the mixing of religion and politics, whether by Gandhi's "inner voice" or the Ali brothers' pan-Islamism, is a critical thread that runs through his entire career.

Another crucial turning point was the 1928 Nehru Report, compiled by a Congress-led committee. Jinnah had hoped this would be a joint constitutional proposal. Instead, the report repudiated the separate electorates agreed upon in the 1916 Lucknow Pact and recommended a unitary state with a strong centre, which Jinnah and other Muslim leaders knew would be dominated by the Hindu majority. For Jinnah, this was a profound betrayal of the 1916 contract and legal proof that Congress, under its new leadership, could not be trusted to safeguard minority rights (Seervai 1989, 42). He saw this as the "parting of the ways."

His "Fourteen Points" of 1929 were his direct, legalistic response to the Nehru Report. I argue that the Fourteen Points are, in essence, a master charter of minority rights. They demanded not just rights for Muslims (like a federal structure, provincial autonomy, and one-third representation at the centre), but also "full religious liberty" for all

communities and safeguards for "minorities in Sind, Baluchistan and the North-West Frontier Province" (Pirzada, ed. 1970, 1:136). Point 7 explicitly states that "In any Cabinet... not less than one-third... should be Muslims," a power-sharing formula, not a demand for religious rule. This archival trail shows a life-long pattern: Jinnah's primary political tool was the constitutional guarantee of minority rights.

His performance at the Round Table Conferences in London (1930–32) further solidifies this view. As the high-level negotiations with the British and other Indian leaders unfolded, Jinnah's interventions, as recorded in the proceedings, are those of a constitutional lawyer. He argued for federalism, provincial rights, and legal safeguards, not for an "Islamic" system (Moore 1983, 115). He was, as R.J. Moore notes, an "Indian nationalist" at the conference, still searching for a "third way" that could protect his community within a united India. It was only after the failure of these talks and the demonstrable "tyranny of the majority" he witnessed in the Congress provincial governments of 1937–39 that he began to conclude that separation was the only remaining legal option.

THE PAKISTAN DEMAND AND MINORITY ALLIANCES  
The 1940 Lahore Resolution, which officially called for the creation of separate "independent states" in the Muslim-majority zones of India, must be read through this established constitutional lens. The text of the resolution itself is remarkably legalistic. It notably does not mention "Islam," "Sharia," or a "theocratic state." Instead, its provision for the new states is explicit in its protection of non-Muslims: "...adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards shall be specifically provided in the constitution for minorities... for the protection of their religious, cultural, economic, political, administrative and other rights and interests in consultation with them" (Pirzada,

ed. 1970, 2:341). I suggest this language is critical. The safeguards were to be "mandatory," "effective," and, most importantly, drafted "in consultation" with the minorities themselves. This is the language of a social contract, not a religious edict.

As Ayesha Jalal (1985) compellingly argues, Jinnah's campaign for "Pakistan" required him to become the "sole spokesman" for all Muslims, yet the political reality was that Muslims themselves were not a monolith. Furthermore, in the two key provinces he needed—Punjab and Bengal—Muslims held only a slim majority. To secure these provinces, Jinnah required the support of non-Muslims. His subsequent alliances, therefore, were not mere political opportunism but a necessary and logical extension of his long-held political philosophy. He sought to prove that minorities would be safer in his proposed state than in a monolithic, Hindu-dominated state governed by a Congress party he no longer trusted. His negotiations with minority leaders were therefore central to the entire Pakistan project, as he sought to build a "coalition of minorities" against the "tyranny of the majority."

The failure of the 1946 Cabinet Mission Plan was the final piece of this puzzle. Jinnah had accepted the Plan, which proposed a three-tiered federal India with weak-centre groups—a solution that would have kept India united but given Muslims autonomy (Moore 1983, 245). Congress's leadership, particularly Nehru, undermined this fragile compromise by publicly stating they would not be bound by the plan's details once in power. For Jinnah, this was the final, unforgivable breach of contract. It proved, in his legalistic mind, that Congress would always use its brute majority to overturn any constitutional safeguard for minorities. It was this, I argue, that sealed his conviction that only a separate, sovereign state—a separate legal

entity—could provide the "mandatory safeguard" he sought.

The most significant and documentable of these alliances was with the Christian community in the Punjab. The archival record shows a series of crucial meetings between Jinnah and Christian leaders, most notably Dewan Bahadur S.P. Singha, the Speaker of the Punjab Legislative Assembly (Chattha 2011, 45). On 20 November 1942, Christian members of the Punjab Assembly held a reception for Jinnah in Lahore, where Singha formally assured him of the Christian community's support in the demand for Pakistan. This support was not given lightly. The Christian community had to choose between their incumbent British rulers, the Indian National Congress, and the Muslim League.

Their decision was a pragmatic one, born of a deep-seated fear of the Hindu caste system and the potential for economic and cultural marginalisation in a Congress-dominated India. The Christian community's rationale for joining Jinnah reveals the nature of his appeal. They, like the Scheduled Castes, felt alienated by the "triple slavery" of British administrative control, Hindu economic dominance, and Sikh land ownership in Punjab (Chattha 2011, 52). They also perceived cultural threats, such as the Congress-backed "Wardha Scheme" of education, as an attempt to "Hinduise" the curriculum and erase their own cultural and religious identity. Jinnah offered them a clear alternative: a constitutional state that would not interfere with their religion, culture, or institutions.

Jinnah was, in effect, offering them the same minority safeguards he had been demanding for Muslims for thirty years. This alliance proved politically decisive. In the critical 1947 vote in the Punjab Assembly to decide the province's fate, the Christian members, led by Singha, cast their votes en bloc with the Muslim League, swinging the

decision in favour of Pakistan (Talbot 2009, 112). Jinnah's specific, documented promises to this community are a vital part of the archival record. In a meeting with Christian leaders on 18 April 1947, Jinnah reportedly assured them that their support would be remembered, promising them that "the Christians shall be a sacred deposit with us," a turn of phrase that implies a formal, almost sacred, trust (quoted in Chattha 2011, 67).

This strategy was not limited to the Christians. Jinnah's most profound symbolic and political gesture of minority inclusion was his engagement with the Scheduled Castes, or "Dalits." He actively courted leaders like Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, finding common cause in their shared opposition to the "caste Hindu" dominance of the Congress. In Bengal, he secured the allegiance of Jogindarnath Mandal, a prominent Scheduled Caste leader. Jinnah's choice to have J.N. Mandal preside over the first session of Pakistan's Constituent Assembly on 10 August 1947 was a masterstroke of political genius and a deeply symbolic act. I suggest this was a direct and intentional challenge to the very foundation of Hindu caste society.

By elevating an "untouchable" to the highest ceremonial position of the new state, Jinnah was signalling to the world that Pakistan would not just be a non-Hindu state, but an anti-caste state, a genuine refuge for all of India's oppressed minorities (French 1997, 301). Mandal was later appointed as Pakistan's first Minister for Law and Labour, solidifying this commitment. This was not a token appointment; it was a clear signal of the kind of meritocratic, non-sectarian state Jinnah intended to build. His outreach also famously extended to the Parsi community in Karachi, whom he praised for their "organising ability, spirit of enterprise and hard work," assuring them that Pakistan "cannot be incognizant of

the minorities within its own borders" (Jinnah 1948, 65).

### THE FOUNDATIONAL VISION: AN ARCHIVAL CLOSE READING (1947)

This brings us to the single most important document in the archival record: Jinnah's presidential address to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan on 11 August 1947. This speech, delivered to the body tasked with writing Pakistan's constitution, was his definitive and foundational policy statement for the new nation. It was delivered against the horrifying backdrop of partition violence, as Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs slaughtered each other across Punjab and Bengal (French 1997, 319). I argue that this context makes the speech more profound, not less. It was not a naive platitude delivered in a time of peace; it was a desperate, clear-eyed, and forceful plea for a new social contract, delivered precisely because the old one was dissolving in blood.

He began by stressing the assembly's "first duty" was to "maintain law and order" and to "crush" the "poison" of bribery, corruption, and nepotism—the practical concerns of a state-builder. Then, Jinnah pivoted to the foundational question of the state's identity. He declared, in language that could not be more explicit: "You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place of worship in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed—that has nothing to do with the business of the State" (Constituent Assembly Debates 1947, 1:2). I must insist on a close reading of this phrase. The first sentence is an unambiguous declaration of absolute freedom of religion. The second sentence is the very definition of a secular state. The phrase "nothing to do with the business of the State" is a clear and deliberate

line separating the private sphere of faith from the public sphere of governance and citizenship.

Jinnah did not stop there. He went on to articulate the end goal of this separation: the creation of a new, unified civic nationalism. He famously stated: "We are starting with this fundamental principle that we are all citizens and equal citizens of one State... I think we should keep that in front of us as our ideal and you will find that in course of time Hindus would cease to be Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense, because that is the personal faith of each individual, but in the political sense as citizens of the State" (Constituent Assembly Debates 1947, 1:3). This passage is the philosophical climax of his argument. He was explicitly asking the nation to transcend the very communal identities that had formed the basis of the partition. The two-nation theory, I argue, was for Jinnah a political and legal tool to achieve partition; but once achieved, he sought to dissolve it into a new one-nation theory for Pakistan, built on the foundation of equal, secular citizenship.

This archival evidence is strongly corroborated by Jinnah's other statements and actions from this period. Jinnah made a conscious and deliberate linguistic choice to stop using the word "minority" and instead use the word "citizen." In a press conference in New Delhi on 14 July 1947, he was clear: "The minorities will have their responsibilities and rights as citizens... What the minorities in Pakistan want is protection and safeguards... I want to make it clear that the minorities in Pakistan will be treated justly and fairly" (Jinnah 1948, 11). His terminology was precise: they were "citizens" who, as a sub-group, were entitled to specific protections, but their primary identity vis-à-vis the state was that of citizen.

His appointments confirmed this vision in practice. The elevation of J.N. Mandal (a Scheduled Caste Hindu) and Dewan S.P. Singha (a Christian) has been noted. Just as significant was his appointment of Chaudhry Sir Muhammad Zafarullah Khan as Pakistan's first Foreign Minister. Zafarullah Khan was a member of the Ahmadiyya community (Wolpert 1984, 342), a group already considered heretical by many orthodox ulema. To appoint an Ahmadi as the nation's face to the world, alongside a Hindu law minister, was a powerful, tangible demonstration of the inclusive, meritocratic, and religiously non-discriminatory state Jinnah was building.

Further archival evidence comes from his addresses to other state bodies. In an address to the civil servants of Pakistan in Karachi on 11 October 1947, he was forceful: "You are not concerned with this or that political party... You are servants of Pakistan. For the time being you may have to serve... a Muslim League or... a Congress Government... As civil servants you have nothing to do with politics... You do not belong to any political party" (Jinnah 1948, 82). This command, ordering a complete separation of the state's machinery from the (Muslim) party that had created it, is a profound, practical application of his secular, institutional vision. The state was to be above party and, by extension, above creed.

His interactions with the press reveal the same liberal, constitutional mindset. In a speech at the launch of Dawn in Karachi, he did not ask for loyal propaganda. Instead, he warned the press "not to go against the fundamental principles of the journalistic profession" and to maintain "high standards of integrity" (Jinnah 1948, 43). He was, in effect, laying the groundwork for a liberal democratic state with a free press, not a one-party or theocratic state that would demand ideological submission. Every concrete action he took as Governor-General, from



appointments to policy speeches, reinforced the secular, constitutional vision of his 11th August address.

### THE GREAT DEVIATION: VISION VS. REALITY

Jinnah's clear, documented, and consistently articulated vision for a secular, pluralistic state was almost immediately imperilled. The first and most devastating blow was his own death on 11 September 1948, barely a year after independence. Jinnah was, as Jalal (1985) terms him, the "sole spokesman," and he was the only political figure with the immense personal authority, popular mandate, and absolute secular conviction to stand against the powerful clerical (ulema) establishment and implement his vision. His death created a profound power vacuum.

The nation's new political leaders, chiefly Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan, lacked Jinnah's towering stature and his deep-seated liberal, constitutionalist roots (Talbot 2009, 130). Facing the immense challenges of refugee resettlement, economic chaos, war in Kashmir, and national consolidation, they sought a different, and perhaps easier, ideological glue to bind the new country together. Liaquat, a good administrator but not a profound political philosopher like Jinnah, needed to consolidate his own power base against rivals in Punjab and Bengal, and he found a useful ally in the clerical establishment.

This new direction was formally and fatefully codified in March 1949 with the passage of the Objectives Resolution by the Constituent Assembly. This document, which would become the preamble to all of Pakistan's future constitutions, represents the single greatest deviation from Jinnah's archival vision. Where Jinnah had declared that religion had "nothing to do with the business of the

State," the Resolution opened by declaring that "sovereignty over the entire universe belongs to Almighty Allah alone, and the authority which He has delegated to the State of Pakistan... is a sacred trust" (Constituent Assembly Debates 1949). It went on to state that "Muslims shall be enabled to order their lives... as set out in the Holy Quran and Sunnah."

The Objectives Resolution fundamentally betrayed the promise of the 11th August speech. With these phrases, the "business of the State" was now inextricably and constitutionally linked to a specific religion. It relegated non-Muslims to a constitutionally inferior status. They were no longer simply "equal citizens," but a protected minority (a zimmi-like status) in a state whose primary purpose was now to enable the majority's religious life. As Muhammad Qasim Zaman (2018) notes, this resolution gave the ulema a formal, constitutional foothold in statecraft that Jinnah had explicitly and consistently denied them throughout his life.

This move, designed to placate clerical groups like those led by Maulana Mawdudi, sowed the seeds for decades of sectarian conflict and minority persecution (Jaffrelot 2016, 112). It was, I suggest, the "original sin" of Pakistan's constitutional history, the moment the state's foundational DNA was mutated from Jinnah's secular, civic nationalism to a state-sanctioned religious identity. The archival record of the dissent against the Resolution is as revealing as the document itself. The non-Muslim members of the assembly, the very people Jinnah had personally brought into the fold, were unanimous in their opposition.

Sris Chandra Chattopadhyay, a Hindu member from East Bengal, delivered a powerful speech, reminding the assembly of the founder's promise: "What I hear in this Resolution is not the voice of the great creator of

Pakistan... Jinnah... [who] said, 'We are all citizens and equal citizens of one State'. But this Resolution... makes the sovereign of this State a particular community. It is not the people who are sovereign... This Resolution is a negation of it" (Constituent Assembly Debates 1949). His protest is the voice of Jinnah's vision from the archive, a voice that was overruled.

The most tragic postscript to this deviation is the fate of J.N. Mandal, the Scheduled Caste leader whom Jinnah had made chairman of the assembly and a cabinet minister. After Jinnah's death and the passage of the Objectives Resolution, Mandal found himself increasingly isolated and powerless as the state's secular promise evaporated. In 1950, he resigned his cabinet post and fled to India, issuing a scathing resignation letter that detailed the systematic discrimination and violence being visited upon Hindus in East Pakistan. His flight was the ultimate symbol of the state's broken promise. The man Jinnah had elevated as a symbol of an anti-caste state was forced to flee, a refugee from the very nation he had helped to found.

### REAPPRAISING THE "SECULAR" JINNAH

This stark contradiction between Jinnah's 1947 vision and the 1949 Resolution has fuelled the central debate: was Jinnah's secularism genuine, or was it a pragmatic tactic to calm minorities and gain international acceptance, a "noble lie" he intended to discard? I argue that the consistency of the archival record, stretching back to the 1910s, proves the sincerity of his conviction. His entire political life was a testament to his belief in constitutional law, parliamentary procedure, and the separation of the personal (faith) from the public (politics). His break with Congress over Gandhi's religious populism and his opposition to the Khilafat movement are formative, consistent pieces of

evidence. His 11th August speech was not a sudden pivot; it was the logical culmination of a political philosophy he had honed for nearly forty years.

Jinnah's model of the state was nuanced. It was not the aggressive, state-enforced *laïcité* of Atatürk's Turkey, a model he publicly rejected. Jinnah was not an anti-religious man; he had a deep cultural and ethical respect for Islam (Ahmed 1997). However, and crucially, it was also not the theocratic model envisioned by Islamist thinkers like Maulana Mawdudi, whom Jinnah reportedly barred from Pakistan's political process. Jinnah's vision was for a state that was, in essence, confessionally neutral. It was a model closer to the British or American tradition, where faith is a private, protected matter for the citizen, not a directive for the state.

The legal scholar H.M. Seervai (1989) powerfully reinforces this point. He argues that Jinnah's two-nation theory was a political and national definition, not a religious one. Jinnah was arguing that the Muslims of India, by virtue of shared culture, history, and a desire for self-determination, constituted a "nation" entitled to a state, just as the "Hindu nation" did. He was not arguing for a state based on the laws of Islam. This is a crucial distinction. For Jinnah, I suggest, Islam provided the ethical principles for the new nation—justice, equality, fraternity, compassion—but not the legal (Sharia) code to be imposed upon its entire, diverse populace.

The evidence from his personal life, while not a primary focus, corroborates this worldview. His own lifestyle was famously secular and anglicised. He was a non-sectarian Shia, married to a Parsi, and his circle of advisors was diverse (Wolpert 1984, 18). He was, in essence, a man of the world, a liberal constitutionalist whose entire being recoiled from the dogmatism of the mullahs.

His vision for Pakistan was a reflection of himself: modern, orderly, legalistic, and tolerant.

The most potent counter-argument is that Jinnah himself "used the religion card" during the 1940s to rally the Muslim masses, particularly in rural Punjab and Bengal. Scholars like David Gilmartin (1988) have shown how the Muslim League, to counter the appeal of local, syncretic traditions, had to appeal to a more orthodox, pan-Islamic identity, often using pirs and local clerics to get out the vote. Jinnah, the argument goes, was therefore hypocritical, using religious rhetoric for political gain only to discard it once in power.

I suggest this is a misreading of political pragmatism versus constitutional intent. Jinnah was, by the 1940s, a political campaigner as well as a constitutionalist. He had to mobilise a mass movement. He did, undoubtedly, appeal to "Muslim sentiment" and the "threat to Islam" posed by a Hindu-dominated Congress. However, I argue that he saw this as a tool for mobilisation, not a blueprint for the constitution. The archival record shows a clear delineation: his populist speeches to the masses used broad religious-cultural strokes, but his every speech to a constitutional body (like the Assembly) or a state institution (like the civil service) was strictly, stringently secular and legalistic. He was a lawyer who knew the difference between a campaign speech and a constitutional provision.

## CONCLUSION

This archival reappraisal of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's political and constitutional vision confirms his unwavering commitment to a pluralistic, democratic, and, I argue, fundamentally secular state. The primary source record does not support the later-day interpretations of a state founded on religious exclusivity. Instead, the archives reveal a leader steeped in constitutional

liberalism, who spent his career advocating for minority rights—first for Muslims within India, and then, decisively, for all minorities within Pakistan. His documented alliances with Christian, Scheduled Caste, and Parsi communities were not cynical political tactics but tangible applications of his core philosophy: that a state is only as just as its treatment of its most vulnerable citizens.

His 15 August 1947 address, therefore, must be read as his definitive, foundational testament, where he explicitly separated religion from "the business of the State" and championed a new, inclusive civic nationalism. The subsequent adoption of the 1949 Objectives Resolution, in the power vacuum following his death, was not the fulfilment of his vision but its first and most profound betrayal. It set Pakistan on a constitutional path that diverged sharply from the one he had laid out, a path that led away from his promise of equal citizenship and toward religious majoritarianism. Jinnah's inclusive vision, preserved in the archives, remains the critical, unresolved inheritance of Pakistan. It is not merely a relic of a bygone historical moment but stands as the most coherent and authoritative "critical point of reference" for navigating the contemporary challenges—from constitutional debates on religious freedom to the legislative and social crises of sectarianism and blasphemy laws—that plague Pakistan today.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

## PRIMARY SOURCES

Constituent Assembly of Pakistan. 1947. *Debates: Official Report. Vol. 1*. Karachi: Manager of Publications.

Constituent Assembly of Pakistan. 1949. *Debates: Official Report. Vol. 5*. Karachi: Manager of Publications.

Jinnah, Muhammad Ali. 1948. *Speeches and Statements as Governor-General of Pakistan 1947-1948*. Karachi: Pakistan Government Press.

Pirzada, Syed Sharifuddin, ed. 1970. *Foundations of Pakistan: All-India Muslim League Documents, 1906-1947*. 2 vols. Karachi: National Publishing House.

Zaidi, Z.H., ed. 1976. *M.A. Jinnah-Ispahani Correspondence, 1936-1948*. Karachi: Forward Publishing.

## SECONDARY SOURCES

Ahmed, Akbar S. 1997. *Jinnah, Pakistan and Islamic Identity: The Search for Saladin*. London: Routledge.

Chattha, Ilyas. 2011. *Jinnah, the Punjab and the Minorities*. Lahore: Vanguard Books.

French, Patrick. 1997. *Liberty or Death: India's Journey to Independence and Division*. London: HarperCollins.

Gilmartin, David. 1988. *Empire and Islam: Punjab and the Making of Pakistan*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Jaffrelot, Christophe. 2016. *The Pakistan Paradox: Instability and Resilience*. Translated by Cynthia Schoch. New Delhi: Penguin India.

Jalal, Ayesha. 1985. *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Moore, R.J. 1983. *Escape from Empire: The Attlee Government and the Indian Problem*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Sayeed, Khalid B. 1968. *Pakistan: The Formative Phase, 1857-1948*. Karachi: Oxford University Press.

Seervai, H.M. 1989. *Partition of India: Legend and Reality*. Bombay: Emmenem Publications.

Talbot, Ian. 2009. *Pakistan: A Modern History*. London: Hurst & Company.

Wolpert, Stanley. 1984. *Jinnah of Pakistan*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Zaman, Muhammad Qasim. 2018. *Islam in Pakistan: A History*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.