

Quaid e Azam's Political Struggle and Memon Community

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Abstract

The role of the state of Kathiawar in the political history of sub-continent has been very significant. This state has the honor of the fact that two great leaders who changed the political scenario of the sub-continent belonged to this very state. There were around 200 independent states in the state of Kathiawar. In those states there was a community whose nobles on the one hand played an important role in making Mahatma Gandhi a political leader, on the other hand supported Quaid e Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah in his political struggle. That community is Memon community. The results of elections in 1937 were very disappointing for Muslim League as they faced a humiliating defeat in them. Though the high ranks in Muslim League were frustrated, Quaid e Azam knew well how to handle turbulent times. At this crucial point, Memon community helped Quaid e Azam in every respect and proved that they would sacrifice anything for Quaid e Azam and Muslim League. Since the ancestors of Memon community and Quaid e Azam belonged to the same race, Quaid e Azam had natural affinity with the Memon community. His personal relations with Memon community were such that whenever Muslim League needed funds he always looked to them and the community never let him down. In the following article, the relationship between Quaid e Azam and the Memon community will be researched so that an important aspect of Quaid e Azam's personality can be highlighted.

The island of Kathiawar is located at the shore of the Arabian Sea. It is 160 miles long and 220 miles wide. Its total area is 22,000 miles square miles. Literal meaning of Kathiawar is 'home of Kathi caste'. The ancestors of Quaid e Azam were from Kathiawar. The part of Gujrat, which is in the form of an island is called Kathiawar, which once known as Sorashatar. Orthodox Barhiman and old local people still call it Sorashatar. The Arabs called it Sorata. The farmers of the thirteenth and fourteenth century who called Kathi settled in one of its parts and started calling it Kathiawar meaning 'cultivation of Kathi'. With the passage of time, the name was adopted for the whole area. The arrival of Kuch was not a new thing for that place. People from nearby places but also from far-flung areas not only used to invade and settle there, as the place is rich in minerals and because the sea near the place are useful for local as well as international trade. Therefore, other than different Indian nations people from Iraq, Arab, Iran and Toran, Portugal, France and England occupied this land. Perhaps it is because of its pluralistic characteristic around 200 memorial states still exist in this area.¹

(It has been a very important place in history as lots of heroes from history and mythology emerged from this place. Dawarka where Krishan). Sadama who loved Sri Krishan and whose love enjoyed immortal status was from Poor Bandar. Junagarh produced an immortal poet Narsinha Mitha whose song was sung in every religious gathering of Mahatma Gandhi everyday. Dyanand Sarsoti also belonged to Kathiawar. This same Dyanand Sarsoti laid the foundation of Aria society. The famous temple of Somnaath is also

¹ Doctor Muhammad Ali Siddique & Khuwaja Razi Haider, "Zikar Qaid-e-Azam: Muntakhib, Mazamin Wo Makalat", Quaid-e-Azam Academy, Karachi 1996, P-107

on the sacred land of Kathiawar. The pharaohs etched on the mountains and rocks of Junagarh and Garnar are still there. Moreover, the sacred monument of Shatarnajia Gen is located here, which is to them what Banaras is to Hindus.²

If we study the history of the sub-continent, it is interesting to note that in the independence struggle Quaid e Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah and Mahatma Gandhi are the two leaders who changed the political history of the sub-continent. Both of them belonged to Kathiawar. Mahatma Gandhi was born on October 2, 1869 in Poor Bandar and when he turned with his parents migrated to Rajkot where he obtained his early education. All these places are located in Kathiawar.

The second famous personality of the sub-continent was Mohammad Ali Jinnah, who changed the course of history by forming All India Muslim League and leading it. His ancestors also belonged to Kathiawar.³

The ancestors of Quaid e Azam arrived in the state of Gondal a small town named Paneli. Bombay Presidency governed the state of Gondal. With the support of British Empire for his loyalty to them, the government of Thakur Sahib existed in full grandeur. After the independence war of 1857, whole sub-continent was tainted with blood of Muslims, but the state of Kathiawar remained safe as those states were independent and they did not participate in the war of independence practically.⁴

Hindus were in majority in the state of Kathiawar. The Muslims were not more than 15%. The Memon community was in majority among those Muslims. The Memon community belonged to trader class who embraced Islam in the 15th century.

In the state of Gondal, the Memon Community was in majority and was engaged in personal business. Though the economy of the state of Gondal was based on agriculture, Quaid e Azam's father was not an agriculturalist; instead, he had manual looms whose cloth he sold at shops. Since the people of Memon community used to do personal business, Jinnah Poonja had cordial relationship with them. The feeling of prejudice was natural, due to belonging to the same creed. The common language kindled nationalism. It should be remembered that Quaid e Azam's, his ancestors and Memon community's mother tongue was Gujrati. Moreover, when Jinnah Poonja arrived in Karachi from Paneli, Gondal, for business, he preferred to settle in Kharadar as the Memons there were in majority and Quaid e Azam spent his childhood there. It was natural that, the Quaid associated with them closely. The relationship between Quaid e Azam and Memon community was indispensable which lasted from his birth until his death and can be elucidated in the following:

Though Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah was born in Karachi, Bombay had special importance for him. It cannot be denied that Quaid-e-Azam reached pinnacle of his abilities in Bombay. Quaid-e-Azam moved to Bombay from Karachi as he needed an ocean to put his hidden talents into practice, and Karachi proved to be just as small as a pond for him. That is why he started his practical life in Bombay where he was registered with Supreme Court as a lawyer on August 24, 1896. The life in Bombay was not easy because when he started his career; Hindu and Parsi lawyers were dominating and due to racial and religious prejudice. It was a daunting task for any Muslim lawyer to emerge at that time. The first three years proved to be terribly difficult for Jinnah but he had not learnt to surrender before testing times. He

² Manon V.P Ray Bahadur "Kashmir Aur Junagadh ki Kahani", Kitab Manzil Lahore 1960, P-140

³ Mahatma Gandhi, "Talash-e-Haq", Fiction House Lahore 2003, P-21

⁴ Muhtarma Fatima Jinnah, "Mera Bhai" Subeech Publisher Lahore 2003, P-12

not only earned high reputation amongst the people of Bombay with his continuous struggle, hard work and passion for his profession, but also was able to connect to the people of Bombay.

Memon Community enjoyed a distinct status in Bombay; therefore, a Muslim lawyer who spoke their very own language was no less than a superior blessing for them. Hence, they did not let the young lawyer feel isolated and as a result, Quaid was considered one of the distinguished men in Bombay. The suggestions of distinguished members of Memon Community had an important place in Quaid's life. The relationship between Memon Community and Quaid-e-Azam grew stronger with the passage of time and stood the tests of times.

Rizwan Ahmed in his book 'My Quaid e Azam' writes:

"December ended and 1918 began. Now 20 February was round the corner. This date was both critical and agreeable. In Bombay lived Mr. Jinnah's old friend and confidante Umer Subhani. Though he had many friends in Bombay, he took Umer Subhani in confidence and started preparations for his (Jinnah's) marital life. Raja Sahib Mehmoodabad was informed and asked to reach Bombay on decided time and date. Raja Sir Mohammad Ali Khan was one of Mr. Jinnah's close friends and his contemporary politician and a top leader. After 20 February, Ms Rattan Petit and Mr. Jinnah were free from restriction orders. Firstly, he arranged to make Ms Rattan Petit embrace Islam. The duty was assigned to Mr. Subhani. The English newspapers of 19 April 1918, which were published from in and outside Bombay, gave this a prominent place in them. Ms Rattan Petit who is the only daughter of Sir Dinsha Petit embraced Islam yesterday (18 April) and today (19 April) she will marry Honorable Mr. Jinnah. It is mentioned in the marriage contract that Haji Sheikh Abul Qasim Najafi, Mirza Mohammad Ali Khan, Raja Mehmoodabad, Ghulam Ali Wakeel, Bhai Devji and Umer Subhani were present on the occasion."⁵

Umer Subhani belonged to the Memon community of Bombay. He was a trader and he was one of the close aides of Mohammad Ali Jinnah. This can be testified by the fact that when Quaid e Azam married Rattan Bai, he signed on the marriage contract on his (Jinnah's) behalf. Quaid used to consult him on private matters. He was an active worker of Muslim league. He was on the reforms committee, which was formed in the eighth conference of Muslim League held in Bombay between 30 December and 1 January 1916. He joined Muslim League because of Quaid e Azam and it was the workers of Muslim league who struggled shoulder to shoulder with their leader. The faith of Quaid e Azam in them showed that Quaid considered them trustworthy for his personal matters. This is not the honor for only Umer Subhani but for whole Memon community that this great man was a reliable companion of Quaid e Azam. (Some historians have spelt him Subhani)

The second chapter of Quaid's life opened in 1906 when he decided to take part in politics and became a member of the Congress.

Syed Riaz Hasan writes, "In the meeting of the Congress held in 1906, Dadabhoy was its president and Jinnah was his private secretary. Soon after that, Mr Jinnah succeeded in the circles of the Congress and got a distinctive status. Though he was junior to Rir Firoz Shah, Mehta etc, he was an emerging leader."⁶ He was an elected member of imperial legislative council, which was formed because of reforms by Munto Mare in 1910. He attended the meeting of the imperial council for the first time on January 25,

⁵ Rizwan Ahmed, "Meray Quaid-e-Azam" Akhbar-e-Jahan Publications, Karachi, 1995, P-61

⁶ Syed Riaz Hasan, Pakistan Naguzeer Tha, Karachi, 1970; page no: 66

1910, and quarreled with the Viceroy Lord Munto in the very first meeting. Next day, the newspapers expressed appreciation of Quaid-e-Azam's boldness and wit in headlines. This incident made Quaid's personality an honor for the people of Bombay. Quaid-e-Azam belonged to Gujrat and his mother tongue was Gujrati. There was a community in Bombay that belonged to Gujrat and their language was Gujrati. That was the Gujrati community. The common characteristics of culture, language and literature, social norms and family traditions between Quaid-e-Azam and Gujrati community brought them closer. This relationship, which was formed in 1900, became stronger with the passage of time. Quaid-e-Azam also had cordial relations with the Memon community that is why members of the Memon community remained close to Quaid-e-Azam. Their relationship thrived also because the members of Memon community reciprocated the love of Quaid towards them and always remained ready to obey his orders. The Memon Community of Bombay was close to Quaid because Quaid has permanent residence in Bombay. The members of Memon Community often met the Quaid. Hanif Manyar narrated about those meetings, "I met Quaid-e-Azam for the first time in 1937. At that time a conference of All India Muslim League was about to be held in Luknow. All delegates from Bombay went to his residence to meet him. I had visited him with my father quite a few times before. My father used to meet him twice or thrice a week. In 1938, Quaid-e-Azam went to offer prayer with my father on the eve of Eid, and we offered prayer in Shadab Nagar." ⁷

This was why the Memon Community stood shoulder to shoulder with Quaid-e-Azam, when he raised his voice against the unconstitutional and unethical acts of the governor Lord Wellington. Quaid-e-Azam showed no tolerance to any undemocratic orders of any Lord or Governor. When Governor Lord Wellington was about to retire, the blue-eyed people of the governor planned a banquet in his honor on behalf of the people of Bombay. The plan failed because of Quaid-e-Azam's wisdom. The way Quaid-e-Azam organized people on a single platform for democracy went into the annals of history as a huge success. In response, the people of Bombay paid tribute to Quaid and his great success, and announced to construct 'Jinnah Peoples Hall' and erect his statue in a town hall of Bombay. It was because Quaid-e-Azam brought the bureaucracy to its knees who had humiliated the people. It was decided to raise funds to acknowledge the great services of the Quaid. Everyone would be honored to contribute at least one Rupee to that fund. ⁸

The Memon Community generously donated to this fund, which was a sign of their confidence and love for Quaid-e-Azam. Habib Lakhani, narrating the construction of that hall, writes:

'In 1918, Mr Jinnah opposed a resolution by weak nationalists and sent his reservations to Lord Wellington. Appreciating Quaid's great move, another Memon leader Umer Subhani prepared a One-Person One-Rupee fund raising plan and collected one Lac Rupees. A hall dedicated to Mr Jinnah was made by the name of Peoples Jinnah Hall which can be seen today in Compound of Congress House Bombay.' ⁹

In the way of every movement there comes a time when it becomes very difficult for the nobles to continue their struggle. At that crucial moment, if the nobles show courage, the movement can be successful; otherwise, the goal goes out of sight. At this stage, the behavior of the activists of that movement becomes as important as those of nobles. In Pakistan Movement, after the elections of 1936-37, a time came when the nobles of the movement were worried because the results of the elections were not encouraging. On the other hand, the Congress secured a great victory. The Congressmen became so

⁷ Compiled and edited by Zakaraya Sajid, Quaid-e-Azam Meri Nazar Mei, Karachi, 1984

⁸ G. Allana, Quaid-e-Azam: The Story of Pakistan, 1996, P-118

⁹ Memorable Memons, Karachi, 1986, P-30

vainglorious that they refused to acknowledge the existence of third party in the country. Jawahar Lal Nehru, who was the president of the Congress, went on to say “In India, there are only two parties: Congress and British Government.” The target of Nehru’s statement was actually Muslim League.¹⁰

Quaid-e-Azam’s reaction was reconciliatory, but the leaders of the Congress were intoxicated in the victory. Quaid-e-Azam at that time was the personality who prevented the Muslim League from disintegration. He expressed his thoughts in the annual meeting in Lucknow where five thousand delegates from different areas were hopeless. Quaid-e-Azam developed a new passion in them. It was decided in that meeting that the Muslim League would be organized at provincial and district levels.

To implement this plan the Memon community came forward before anyone else and organized the Muslim League. First primary Muslim League was formed in ‘Ward C’ where Memons lived in majority and Quaid himself was its basic member. This foundational Muslim League also had members of Memon Community as its basic members. The important people who presided over it included Ishaq Ahmed Chapra, Haji Suleiman Adamjee, Qasim Usman Khaandwala. C ward Muslim League also had distinction of holding its first meeting and putting up Muslim League flag after its reorganization at district level.¹¹

Based on good relationship with Quaid-e-Azam, Memon Community not only organized the Muslims on regional level, but also revived the confidence of leaders and encouraged them on central level. Therefore, when the convention of All India Muslim League was held in Bombay, Memon Community made tremendous efforts for its success. They arranged a reception in the honor of the leaders in which a delegation from All India Memon Conference headed by its President Haji Umer Maachiswala participated. On June 5, 1938, another reception, given at Bombay is famous Qaisar Bagh, was headed by Mr Abdul Karim Jan Mohammad Memon. Among others the leaders who attended the the reception included Chief Minister of Punjab, Sir Sikander Hayat, Chief Minister of Bengal, Fazle Haq, Nawab Ahmed Yar Khan, Nizamuddin, Home Minister of Bengal Abdul Mateen Chaudhry, Agriculture Minister Aurangzeb Khan, from Frontier League Syed Abdul Rauf Shah and Mlik Barkat Al, Seth Abdul Majeed, from Sindh Abdullah Haroon, Mayor of Bombay Sultan Jatoi, Moulana Shoukat Ali, Moulana Zafar Ali Khan, President of Memon Conference Seth Haji Umer Maachiswala etc.¹²

In that reception, other members of the Memon Conference: Mr Abdul Ghani Meghani, Mr Abdul Rahim Marfani and Mr Umer Haji Wali Mohammad. The Consulate of Iraq was also present on the occasion.¹³

After the recitation from the Holy Quran, Memon Chamber of Commerce and Memon Merchant Association gave a combined message, which was read out by Alhaaj Ibrahim Motiwala.

Address of welcome:

Pride of the nation, Leader of the state, Quaid-e-Azam
Mohammad Ali Jinnah,
President of the All India Muslim League,
Honorable son of the country and the nation,

¹⁰ Mohammad Yunus Sethi, Subhe Jamal, Lahore, 1995, P-271

¹¹ Lakhani, Memorable Memons, Karachi, 1986, P-28

¹² Zahid Hussain Anjum, Encyclopedia Quaid-e-Azam, Lahore, 1991, P-570

¹³ Yahya Hashim Bawani, Translated by Khatri Asmat Ali Patel, Tehreek-e-Azadi aur Memon Biradari, Karachi, 1982, P-70

“It will not be wrong if we call you Leader of the nation and protector of Hindu minority. Who is not aware of your achievements in politics? Everyone knows that 90 million staunch Muslims will follow the policy you have adopted, under your leadership.

You have spent most of your political life in the Congress, but you have witnessed the fact your Muslim brothers have been denied their rights. Therefore, you have withdrawn from the Congress and vowed to organize your own nation. The country is passing through critical times. Muslims were sunk in ignorance. You have acted like a messiah to wake them up and put into them a new impetus. We are agreed with you on the point that in order to unite with Hindus, first Muslims badly need to be united.

We belong to the contemporary Memon business community of Bombay. Though we have kept away from politics, we assure you that we will support you and if we have to sacrifice our lives to obey your command we will not hesitate to do so. Muslims from every corner of the country have accepted you as their sole leader. Not only Muslims of Bombay trust you but also Muslims of whole India do it. Therefore, we congratulate you on this achievement and pray to God that you may live a long life in order to get India freedom and you can witness all Muslims free with your own eyes.

We have expressed our affection towards you in humble words and presented you the message’.

Your disciples,

Haji Abdullah Haji Abdul Ghafoor
President
Memon Chamber of Commerce Bombay

Abdul Karim Haji Jan Mohammad
President
Memon Merchant Association, Bombay.¹⁴

This address at the reception reflected the emotions of Memon Community. If that meeting was called the representative of the Memon Community, it wouldn't be wrong. As a leader of central level Haji Umer Maachiswala along with other notables attended it, the participation with Quaid-e-Azam proved that the Memon Community was with him and had resolved to support him in any form possible. The striking feature of that meeting was that Seth Haji Umer Maachiswala (1902-1992) presented the Quaid with a casket made of silver and a pouch with Rupees.¹⁵

Seth Umer Maachiswala belonged to Dhoraji. He with Mr Haroon Sooriya and Mr Aziz Danawala formed ‘**Kathiyawar Memon Students**’ and organized its conference. He played an important in freedom struggle of Pakistan, especially when Quaid in 1940 came to Dhoraji for press fund, he hosted the Quaid. Speaking to a large gathering at Qaisar Bagh where he was representing the Memon Community, he said ‘**Leader of the Nation!** I feel elated to present to you this gift and assure you that the

¹⁴ Yahya Hashim Bawani, Translated by Khatri Asmat Ali Patel, Tehreek-e-Azadi aur Memon Biradari, Karachi, 1982, P-71

¹⁵ Zahid Anjum Hussain, Encyclopedia Quaid-e-Azam, Lahore, 1991, P-483

Memon Community like their other Muslim brothers will continue to give you their support in term of money and even their lives. My Memon Community is extremely happy with your achievements. I announce that Memon Community stands shoulder to shoulder with you.’¹⁶

Quaid-e-Azam thanked the nobles of the Memon Community in the following words:

“I am pleased to see that a business community like the Memon is also taking interest in politics and their step is evidence of the fact that whatever the Muslim League is doing is most appropriate. Today every group stands firmly with Muslim League. No one has ever presented to me a message and purse like this. Whatever I do is for the rights for the Muslims. I get a feeling from the gathering that Muslims agree with the policy of the Muslim League. Muslims are not only supporting the policy of the Muslim League but are also willing to sacrifice their lives and property. We are confident that the way we are following is the right and clear way.”¹⁷

Sir Sikander Hayat, Fazl e Haq and Sir Abdullah Haroon also, spoke on the occasion and thanked the Memon Community for being loyal and donating money to Quaid-e-Azam, and for playing their part in promoting the political philosophy of the Muslim League. Specially Sir Abdullah Haroon who himself belonged to the Community proudly said ‘it is my nation who opened this new chapter in Bombay.’ After that, Moulana Zafar Ali Khan (1872-1956) read out a eulogy in the honor of the memons and received great applause. Moulana Zafar Ali Khan was a fiery speaker, a bold journalist, great poet of the freedom of the freedom movement and a companion of Quaid-e-Azam. Moulana Zafar Ali Khan in this poem not only expressed his feelings about the Memon Community, but also eluded them to a community, which is blessed by Allah, and in his poem is present in Baharistan with the title of ‘Yateemkhana Kalikat.’ He ignited the passion of the Memon Community and other Muslims in these words:

بھیک ہم مانگنے آئے ہیں تیریوں کے لئے
ایک پیوند کے دام ان کی گلیوں کے لئے
لائے ہیں دولت کو نین کا پیغام ہم آج
کوچہ خولچہ ویشب کے مقیموں کے لئے
ہونے والی ہے خداوند کی رحمت نازل
وقت آیا ہے سخاوت کا کریوں کے لئے
مہمنہ کا لقب اللہ نے تجویز کیا
مہمنوں کے لئے اور ان کے مہمنوں کے لئے
ہے فقط اہل کرم کے لئے فردوس بریں
نہیں یہ دولت جاوید لہیموں کے لئے

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¹⁶ Yahya Hashim Bawani, Translated by Asmat Ali Patel, Freedom Movement and Memon Community, Karachi, 1982, P-72

¹⁷ Ibid, P-73

¹⁸ Zafar Ali Khan, Compiled and Edited by, Zahid Ali Khan, Baharistan, Maktaba E Karwan, Lahore, 1962, P-69

Quaid e Azam was struggling at many fronts at the same time. He was working hard to make Muslim League a popular party among people and he succeeded in doing so to a great extent, but he was aware of the fact that to bring Muslim league's point of view to higher authorities. An English newspaper of high quality was needed because Hindus had virtual control over the press at that time, and voicing of Muslim league's view was getting difficult. Muslim League did not have enough funds to publish a newspaper, therefore Quaid e Azam appealed for collecting funds and stimulated the Muslims around the country, so that an independent press can be formed with their help. It is pertinent to note here that the campaign Quaid e Azam started for the collection of funds and the place he went personally to for the purpose was a Memon-populated area i.e. the state of Kathiawar and Gujrat. A question arises as to why Quaid e Azam chose the Memon populated area in the sub-continent, when Quaid had supporters all over the country.

Quaid e Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah was not a shallow politician, instead he is considered one of those politicians who are well aware of reaction of every action and who knew the pulse of the nation. If Quaid e Azam had started his campaign in a region where he would not get desired support, it would have had adverse effects on the politics of the sub-continent. After the defeat in 1935, elections that would prove to be a mistake and that would shake the foundations of the Muslim League. Quaid e Azam selected that region because he knew that Memon community was a very small section of the sub-continent's population, but their hearts beat with him and they were ever ready to follow him. Due to his affinity with Memon community, he was confident that he would receive an overwhelming response from them. Its concrete evidence is that he was well received in Rajkot, Gonadal, Dhoraji, Junagarh, Veraval, Vanthali, Mangrol, Manawdar, Bantva, Kutiyana, Ranawow, Poorbandar, Uplata, Jeetpur, and everywhere else Quaid was given a royal reception which endorses his strong relationship with Memon community. In his speech at Jeetpur he explained this relationship in the following words:

"The Memon community of Kathiawar gave me a lot but more money is needed. Now others should also come forward and play their part. I have no doubt that if I lived in Kathiawar for a month, I would be able to generate funds in millions."¹⁹

During his visit, he collected funds of Rupees 50,000, which was almost all given by Memon community. He was also able to generate funds from Ahmedabad, Soorat, Bombay and Africa amounting to Rupees 2,50,000. It is not wrong to say Gujrati speakers and Memon community gave that almost whole press fund.²⁰ The fund from Memon community is an example of their exalted love for their leader, which is still unparalleled in the history of the freedom.

The Memon community was well aware of the fact that any formula pertaining to the division of the sub-continent that would incorporate Kathiawar, Gujrat, and Bombay in the Islamic state would not be acceptable as the Muslims in those states were not more than 15%. In addition, these places were geographically close to Hindu dominated areas though, the Memon community was still supporting the Muslim League, and the top leadership of the Congress such as Walabh Bhai Patel was watching them closely and was trying to win them on the Congress side, and conspired against Muslims for this purpose. However, the intellectuals of the Memon community countered these machinations. It can be concluded that this was because of the personality of Quaid e Azam. The Memon community considered Quaid e Azam a member of their community, and Quaid too felt the same way towards them, therefore Quaid e Azam and Memon community helped each other strongly. The Quaid e Azam knew that those states would not become a part of the Islamic state, yet he supported and encouraged them on all occasions.

¹⁹ Muhammad Iqbal Memon, "Memon World", Memon Book Foundation of Pakistan, Karachi 2007, P-42

²⁰ Habib Lakhani, "Memorable Memons" Lakhani Publication, Karachi 1986, P-29

During the fund raising campaign for the press he announced in his speech at Jeetpur that Memon community should not feel isolated because 90 million Muslims are behind them. He said:

“Kathiawar is a state of that country whose princess is good and promotes justice but their capability of implementation is poor. During our visit to their land it should be made clear to them that the Muslims of Kathiawar are not alone, in case of any act of cruelty on them all Muslims of the sub-continent will not stay silent. Now Muslims will not live like the oppressed as the sun of oppression has set”.²¹

The thoughts of Quaid-e-Azam reflect his love and relationship with the Memon Community because Quaid-e-Azam reciprocated their love and respect with equal vehemence. On August 21, 1945, the Viceroy announced the new elections for central and provincial legislative bodies so that the claims of the Congress and Muslim League could be verified. Muslim League was contesting these elections to prove their claim of representing the Muslims of India and to prove the demand of the people for Pakistan. The Congress tried to defeat the Muslim League to disprove the representative status. Hence, the Congress solidified its contacts with unimportant non-Muslims League groups such as Momins, Ehrari, Shia Conference and Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind. In Punjab Uniset Party, in Sindh G M Syed Group, in Frontier leftists dominated who were the supporters of the Congress and bitterly against the Muslim League. In those circumstances, it was necessary for Quaid-e-Azam to monitor the elections in the sub-continent himself. Therefore, it was impossible for him to organize the public opinion in his own constituency. The Congress tried to defeat and deprived the Quaid of representing his constituency so that he could not claim the leadership of Muslims. Because the voters of his own constituency will have rejected him, so he will have no moral grounds left to claim the leadership of Muslim nation. Under those conditions, the elections of 1945 proved to be a formidable challenge for Quaid-e-Azam. On the one hand, he had to bring his party success; on the other hand, he had to win himself. Since 1909, Quaid had winning without contest. In Bombay, Muslims had three seats for the first five years, and two for the next two years. In 1945 elections, Muslims had two seats. As usual, for one seat, Quaid was contesting and for the other an important leader of Memon Community Ahmed E H Jaffer was given the ticket. The Congress by a scheme brought the President of All India Shia Committee Hussain Lalji to contest with Quaid-e-Azam. Quaid due to important engagements was not able to concentrate on elections. A crusader of Baluchistan Freedom Movement Fazal Ahmed Ghazi noted the situation as an activist of Quaid in the following words:

“Narrating an incident of elections Ghazi sahib (Fazal Ahmed Ghazi) told that he had gone to Bombay for Quaid’s work. The constituency of Bombay from where the Quaid was contesting, Congress and Jamiat Ulema Hind brought Hussain Bhai Lalji for competition. One day Quaid said that he would come there on the day of elections as Frontier needed me most. We said that your election is vital for the movement therefore, your stay in Bombay is important. He said that my strength lies in you the youth. He asked us to go to voters and explain to them what Pakistan is. What loss the Muslims would have to face with India united. He left for Peshawar after giving us instructions and we started working in his constituency.”²²

The peculiarity of the elections in British rule was that only those people had a right to vote who had certain property. The poor Muslims who gathered under the flag of Muslim League were not allowed to vote. Memon Community was a prosperous community of Bombay and their majority had the right to vote. They had particular affinity with Quaid so they passionately supported him. Memon Community

²¹ Zahid Hussain Anjum, "Encyclopedia Quaid-e-Azam" Maqbool Academy, 1991 P-233

²² Syed Salahuddin, Ban Key Raha Pakistan, Islamabad 1993, P-274

was very active during the elections. In that era, following Memon notables held position in Muslim League at provincial level.

Noor Mohammad Ahmed Secretary, 1940-43

Noor Mohammad Ahmed Treasurer, 1943-45

Yousuf Maldina Secretary, 1945

Abu Bakar Abdul Rehman Treasurer, 1939-43

Noor Mohammad Ahmed popularly known as Haji Noor Mohammad Urswala (1928-1996) created passion while working in C Ward as representative of the Federation. On the day of elections, he performed his duties at the polling station of Anjuman Islamic High School whole day along with Khatri Ismail Ibrahim Chundrigar and other influential leaders of the Muslim League.²³

Other Memon leaders with toil and hard work of day and night maintained communication with voters, because according to law Memon voters were in majority in that constituency. Even Memon women also played a vital role along with men for the victory of Quaid.

S Maqsood Hasan writes:

“Similarly when Quaid became a candidate for the central assembly in a constituency in Bombay, Muslim female students gave their valuable services and till his victory worked very hard along with Muslim men and women. Ms Ansa Gul Bano Hussain, Ms Meher Bano Vishram (Memon), Ms Fatima Bai (Memon), Ms Zeenat Bai (Memon) are among other prominent names who from election campaign till vote count struggled and worked very hard. Due to their toil and hard work Quaid-e-Azam won with overwhelming majority.”²⁴

Independent candidate Hussain Lalji, who was supported by Congress and Hindu benefactors, was contesting from both the seats. In the second constituency, he was contesting with Ahmed E H Jaffery. He belonged to Memon Community and he had close association with Quaid-e-Azam. When Hussain Lalji was sure of his defeat, he manipulated a conspiracy and hypocrisy. Ahmed E H Jaffery unearthed the conspiracy and said,

“In 1945 elections, there were two seats in Bombay. From one seat, Quaid was contesting and from the other I was given the ticket. As usual, Hussain Lalji independently contested from both the seat with the support of Congress and Hindus. The sent me a message: withdraw or take 5 to 10 lac rupees if I you want to. However, I refused. The purpose was if withdrew from that seat, Quaid would be compelled to give the ticket of Muslim League to Hussain Lalji, and Lalji would contest independently.”²⁵

Ahmed E H Jaffer (1909-1990) belonged to the state of Kutch and his ancestors had settled in Bombay for trade. Usually Memon Community was considered as worshippers of wealth. Nevertheless, the situation and historical facts denied that. It was proven by the fact that refused bribe amounting to Rs 5 to 10 lac Rupees by Ahmed Jaffer equals to billions of Rupees today. When Hussain Lalji saw his scheme failing, he negotiated with the Quaid about which Ahmed Jaffer writes:

²³ Umer Abdul Rehman, Memon Shaksiyat, part two, Karachi, 2003, P-144

²⁴ S. Mansoor Hasan, Quaid-e-Azam: Mozuati Mutalla, Karachi, 1987, P-54

²⁵ Compiled and edited by Zakarya Sajid, Quaid-e-Azam Meri Nazar Main, Karachi, 1984, P-173

“One day the Quaid called me and said that look Ahmed, Hussain Bhai is so greedy and shameless person. He came to me and said that Mr Jinnah I should ask you (Ahmed Jaffer) to withdraw in my favor, and in return, I would withdraw in your favor so that you (Quaid) could be elected without competition. Quaid told Hussain Lalji that he was ready to waste one seat of Muslim League for the sake of winning without competition. Quaid scolded him and told him clearly to get out. This incident increased his respect in my eyes. He never compromised on the benefit of Muslim League.”²⁶

The whole sub-continent was focusing on the elections of this constituency: pen of Hindu press, lockers of Hindu businesspersons, and the politics of Congress were fully supporting Husain Lalji. It created a fake environment of competition. The notables of Muslim League were also engaged in the practical field. The notables included Raja Sahib Mehmoodabad, I.I. Chandigarh, Ahmed Jaffery, Haji Noor Mohammad Urswala, Habin Ibrahim Rehmatullah were running the election campaign in Quaid'd absence(Quaid was visiting Frontier). Memon Community was wholeheartedly working with these notables of Bombay. Hussain Lalji could sense his defeat. Conspirators became active again and conspired to change the election results. Mukhtar Zimm writes ‘One day before elections, supporters of Lalji got a rumor published in evening dailies that Sir Aga Khan instructed the Ismaili sect to vote for Ljji. It was an unethical act yet dangerous. Sir Aga Khan was living in Delhi those days. Mr Habib Ibrahim Rehmatullah (he was close associate and supporter of Quaid) immediately contacted Sir Aga Khan on the phone. Sir Aga Khan not only denied that but also appealed to his Ismaili sect to vote for Quaid. The statement of Sir Aga Khan was immediately published in a pamphlet by mulsim students and distributed it amongst the voters on the day of polling.’²⁷

All conspiracies failed and Quaid-e-Azam won gloriously. On the other seat, Laljee got a humiliating defeat in the hands of Ahmed Jaffer. On both the seats, Laljee had his bail lost. About the election competition, A A Rauf says:

“It wasn't a competition. It was a competition between a rat and a monster but Laljee was playing his every card. Nationalist newspapers were publishing his biography and his big photographs and were projecting him as a biggest protector of the interests of Shias. However, result? He got only 127 votes and had his bail cancelled. Lalji faced the same humiliation in the southern division of Bombay where he was contesting against Ahmed Jaffer.’²⁸

All India Muslim League not only won those two seats but also had 30 seats reserved out of 102 in the central assembly. It was the first example in the constitutional history where any party grabbed 100 per cent seats. In Mr Liaquat Ali Khan's, view who was General Secretary of All India Muslim League it was the most glorious victory of a political part in any country, in any era.²⁹

A disciple of founder of Khaaksar Tehreek Rafiq Sabir attacked Quaid-e-Azam on July26, 1943. The accused wanted to kill Quaid-e-Azam, but fate did not. The Memon Community was grieved by this incident, but when Quid-e-Azam recovered The Memon Trade Association Bombay, celebrated his well-being by organizing an event in his honor.

²⁶ Compiled and edited by Zakarya Sajid, Quaid-e-Azam Meri Nazar Main, Karachi, 1984, P-174

²⁷ Mukhtar Zimm, Tehreek-e-Pakistan Main Talba Ka Kirdar, Karachi, 1986, P-221

²⁸ A.A. Rauoof-Meet Mr. Jinnah, Karachi, 1978, P-179

²⁹ Sardar Khan Mohammad, Hayat Quaid-e-Azam, Lahore, 1949, P-608

This event was organized was held in Bombay on October 14, 1943, in which the Memon Community expressed unity with Quaid-e-Azam. Quaid addressing the gathering said:

“I don’t want to go into the details of the attack, because the case is subjudiced in the court. However, I would like to tell you that the threats or attacks on him cannot change his faith. Swords of killers cannot resolve the problems we are facing. This reality is the reiteration of the fact which was announced by Quran 1300 years ago, which should be the foundation of every muslim’s faith and action i.e. ‘AL Akarah fidding.’ ”³⁰

The reception by Memon Board of Traders was the evidence of their devotion to Quaid. The reception was attended by Memon Community and showed confidence in the manifesto of Muslim League.

Memon Chamber of Commerce was an economic platform whose basic purpose was to protect the interests of its members. However, the platform had special link with Quaid-e-Azam and he too carried love for it. The members of Memon Chamber of Commerce were always ready to sacrifice for Quaid-e-Azam. On 1945-46 elections, the funds given by the Chamber in particular were appreciable. After the central elections, Sardar Bhai Patel issued a statement from Ahmedabad challenging Muslim League that there was limited number of voters in the central assembly therefore Muslim League could not claim to be the sole representative party of Muslims. For legislation, we are presenting Muslim candidates and will be putting up great opposition to Muslim League. Muslim League accepted the challenge wholeheartedly. In response to the challenge given by Sardar Bhai Patel, Muslim Chamber of Commerce Bombay invited Quaid-e-Azam to its meeting and gave one lac twenty-seven thousand rupees to him. Quaid-e-Azam replied, “Sirs, you have shown full confidence in Muslim League and Pakistan with this donation of one lac twenty-seven thousand rupees. I am immensely pleased by your passion.”³¹

The patronage and love of Quaid-e-Azam for Memon Chamber of Commerce formed a political forum. Therefore, Quaid-e-Azam devised his strategy, particularly when they were approaching the goal of Pakistan, on this platform. Addressing a gathering of Memon Chamber of Commerce on March 27, 1947 Quaid said ‘I firmly believe that these two nations will live in Pakistan together like friends and Hindus and Muslims living in Pakistan and India will tell the world that India is only for Indians.’

I am pondering over a number of educational, economic and social progress plans. I think there is no other way for Muslim traders but to create economic organization at any cost so that Muslims can patronize adventures like Tata industry. They should also open industrial and educational institutions for the welfare of Muslims. We need to organize our nation. Other nations might call it competition or see this organization as a sectarian step. These nations have been living for centuries and will continue to live in future too.

On 22 December 1946, the Memon Community of Karachi arranged a reception in the honor of Quaid e Azam in which Quaid e Azam said ‘I feel immensely pleased to be invited to a reception given by the Memon community of trade community. I know that Memon is a brave community. This intellectual community has encouraged me sincerely and clearly in the planning of Pakistan. I feel looking at posters around me that you people have made a lot of progress rapidly. I also have a feeling that you have adopted the principle of Lahore Declaration before it is passed.’

³⁰ Compiled by Ahmed Saeed, Daily Iqulab, 7 October 1943, reference Quaid-e-Azam in the Eyes of Muslim Press, Karachi

³¹ Raees Ahmed Jaffery, Quaid-e-Azam’s Speeches, Lahore, P-409

After that Quaid e Azam suggested to Memon community to come over to Pakistan's place Sindh to settle down. He said:

"I would like say a few words to your community. The real people of Sindh like you have spread in and outside India and have earned prestige. However, you have forgotten your homes and I fear that your irresponsibility towards your home will dry up the roots. The doors of vast fields are open to you. The Sukkur barrage and its connected canal need your attention. To bring prosperity to you and your generations to come, and for your economic autonomy the vast plains here are waiting for you. Therefore, in short my suggestion to those who have left their homes is to come back. Hopefully every rich Memon would follow my advice."³²

Quaid e Azam's advice to Memon community, to come back, showed that he had deep insight into their history. He knew that Memon community's natural relationship is connected to this area; therefore, he invited them to settle down in their homeland. The researcher in his research has concluded that Memon community was the only community of sub-continent, which was personally invited by Quaid e Azam to help Pakistan's economy grow. I have no other incident in my knowledge in which Quaid e Azam made a direct invitation to any other community to come to Pakistan. It was his deep love for Memon community that made him do so. In response, the Memon community migrated to Pakistan and played their role in establishing strong economy in Pakistan.

Quaid e Azam had special relations with the intellectuals of the Memon community. He not only used to take advice from them but also enjoyed cordial family terms with them. Be it Sir Abdullah Haroon from Sindh, Usman Eisa Bhai Advocate from Rajkot, Sir Adamjee, Ahmed E H Jaffer, Quaid e Azam had direct relations with them. He always took advice from them on every matter. In this connection Quaid e Azam had special relations with Sir Adamjee. The struggle and sacrifices made by Sir Adamjee are important enough to be written in golden words in history. In addition, he had exemplary relations with Sir Abdullah Haroon and other intellectuals. Quaid e Azam discussed every matter with them and took valuable advice from them. He followed their advice after thorough discussions. Highlighting this aspect E H Jaffer narrates an incident from his life.

"On the occasion of my sister's wedding I made a special request to Quaid e Azam to come over which he accepted. On the decided date Quaid e Azam arrived at sharp 5 o' clock. Liaquat Ali Khan, Raja Ghazanfar Ali Khan with other cabinet members were also present. I had not invited more than 60 to 70 people as per Quaid e Azam's instruction. Next day Quaid e Azam reached the party with Ms Fatima Jinnah at sharp 7 o' clock. At that time, no guest had arrived except the family members. Quaid e Azam on his arrival met everyone gladly and left at 7:30. Usually people arrive late in parties. Photographer had not arrived too. I apologized for it. He said, 'what happened? We can take the photographs when you come to my home'.³³

Quaid e Azam usually avoided personal parties but it was his immense love for Memon community that he not only would accept the invitations but also felt elated. This shows there was a special affinity between him and the community.

³² Mujalla "The Memon" Ba-Unwan "Chandi ki Golliyani", United Memon Jamat, Karachi. 1986 P-6

³³ Ahmed.E.H.Jaffar, "Quaid-e-Azam ki La Zawal Yadain, Zikarya Sajid, "Quaid-e-Azam Mere Nazar men", Quaid-e-Azam Academy, Karachi 1984 P-175

The foundation of Quaid e Azam's relationship with the Memon community stood on common creed, common language, common culture, common interests and common objectives. Hence Memon community considered Quaid e Azam a member of the community, Quaid e Azam considered Memon community his own community, and no other community was fortunate enough to get this honor.

CONCLUSION

Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah was a great leader of South Asia who knew well how to change the currents of history. Muslims of every region of South Asia were spellbound in his love. They took every word from his mouth as a command. The nobles of Memon Community had the honor of being with him not only in political matters, but also had a say in his family matters. It is pertinent to mention that the places where Memon Community was settled, they were independent states and they could not become a part of an independent Islamic state, because Muslim population was no more than 15 per cent. Nevertheless, this community rendered its due of their relationship and sacrificed their lives and money for him. Memon Community was considered a prosperous community of South Asia. Their standard of living was very high, and the states where they were settled were monetarily content and prosperous e.g. the total population of Bhawalnagar was 6, 18,429. There were 92% Hindus and 8% Muslims and the total area of the state was 2,961 square miles and revenue was Rs. 1, 36, 69, 571 per annum.

Jamnagar consisted of 5 lac 4 thousand and six people and annual revenue was 98 lac Rupees and the area was 3, 791 square miles. The state used to pay tax amounting to Rs. 1 lac 20 thousand 93. Its prince was given an honor of 21 cannon fire.

Rajkot had the population of one lac and thirty thousand and it was spread on 283 square miles of area. Its annual revenue was 15 lac and its prince was given an honor of 9 cannon fire.

Urinder consisted of 1, 46, 648 people; it covered an area of 643 square miles and the annual revenue was approximately Rs. 33 lac and 58 thousand and its prince was given an honor of 13 cannon fire.

Gondal was the best example of a welfare state. The prince of Gondal was the richest prince in Kathiyawar. Education was the responsibility of the government. Its women were also educated and had awareness. It had 2, 67, 051 people out of which there were 18% Muslims and was spread over 1180 square miles and had the annual income of Rs. 60 lac. The prince was given an honor of 11 cannon fire.

The specialty of Morby was that it had its own personal railway tracks, which were 133 miles long and a separate tram service. 60% people had the facility of post office. There were 20 GPOs. 40% people had the facility of telephone. The population of the state was 1, 41,817 and was spread on 1, 072 square miles, and annual revenue was Rs. 81 lac, 29 thousand, 66. Its prince was given an honor of 11 cannon fire.³⁴

These examples amply prove that these states were prosperous and their citizens were living, contented and peaceful lives. However, the role they played in the Pakistan Movement was appreciable in respect to their amiable relationship with the Quaid. This is the point in history, which has been hidden from researchers. It is necessary to spread awareness among new generation about the achievements of the Memon Community so that patriotism can be kindled in their hearts and they can be proud of their ancestors' glorious achievements.

³⁴ This information is taken from several of Millat Gujrati in 1947