Title	Islam, Secularism and Idea of Pakistan
Author (s):	Dr. Sultan Mahmood,Prof. Dr. Fakhr-ul-Islam
Received on:	29 July, 2021
Accepted on:	29 November, 2021
Published on:	25 December, 2021
Citation:	Dr. Sultan Mahmood,Prof. Dr. Fakhr-ul-Islam, ""Islam, Secularism and Idea of Pakistan," Al-Azhār: 7no,2(2021):70-81
Publisher:	The University of Agriculture Peshawar

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Islam, Secularism and Idea of Pakistan

*Dr. Sultan Mahmood
**Prof. Dr. Fakhr-ul-Islam

Abstract

Concept of Islam, as a complete and comprehensive code of life has played the role of theoretical foundation and primary motivating force in the movement for Pakistan. Muslims of Indian subcontinent demanded a separate state for themselves to fashion all of the individual and collective spheres of life in accordance with teachings and commandments of Islam. They believed that Islam is more than western concept of religion, according to which religion is merely a set of beliefs and rituals. Islam has its own social, political, economic, legal, moral, judicial, educational and cultural systems and for implementation of these systems, they required an independent state. This concept has challenged and negated the dominant ideology of that time i.e. Secularism, which declares the religion; private affair of a person and negates any role of region in social, political and all of the collective spheres of life. This paper attempts to investigate Islamic nature of the idea of Pakistan and compares it with its antagonistic ideology of secularism.

Keywords: Islam, Pakistan, Secularism, State, Politics

*Associate Professor in Pakistan Studies, Government College of Management Sciences, Abbottabad
** Director, Pakistan Study Centre, University of Peshawar

Introduction

Islam has played fundamental role in the creation of Pakistan. Religion and faith of the Muslims of Indian Sub-continent not only played the role of principal motivating factors in their struggle for separate independent state, but it also gave them an ideal, goal, objective and consequent unity and strength to achieve their difficult goal. Allama Mohammad Iqbal who first proposed the idea of Pakistan during his presidential address delivered to the annual All-India session of the Muslim League in 1930 argued that Islam, as a social structure regulated by a political and legal system and "animated by a specific ethical ideal—has been chief formative factor in the life-history the Muslims of India.." (Iqbal, 2000, p.55) American Scholar Ralph Braibanti has rightly observed that "invocation of Islam as its *raison d'etre"* has given Pakistan a unique status among the Muslim states, as it has been explicitly founded on religious grounds through a popular political and democratic struggle rather than, like most of the present Muslim states, as a result of colonial strategy or historical accident. (Braibanti, 1996)

Islamic Foundations of the Idea of Pakistan

Islam as a complete code of life had provided fundamental justification to the demand and struggle for Pakistan. Famous political scientist Keith Callard argues that nature and dynamics of the demand for Pakistan cannot be understood and realized unless it is clearly acknowledged that Islam, for the Muslims of India, was more than a religion in the western sense. It was, and still is, a vision about life that embraced political, social, economic and cultural aspects of human life. Islam provides principles and guidelines to maintain and develop international relations, maintenance of the public finance and services for social welfare, production, development and distribution of wealth. It guides about the formation and structure of family and maintenance of good family life, as well as about proper place of the hands during the prayer. (Callard, 1968, p.97)

Muslims of India struggled for their separate homeland, free from both the Hindus and British government, to fashion their lives in accordance with the ideals and teachings of Islam. State of Muslims' mind, their hopes, ideals, aspirations, objectives and emotions got best expression in the following most popular slogan during the movement for Pakistan:

پاکستان کا مطلب کیا: لا الہٰ الا اللہ

[What does Pakistan mean? There is no god but Allah]

This slogan clarifies that they wanted a state in which Allah's commandments would be dominant in every sphere of life.

Preservation and development of this distinctive culture and civilization required independent state. Holy Prophet (PBUH) has said:

Islam and the state are twins, so that neither can exist in good order without the other. Islam is like the foundation of a building and the state is like its caretaker. If a building has no foundation it crumbles and if it has no caretaker to look after it is ruined. (Said, 1979, p.3)

Islam has always remained dominant theme in the freedom struggle of the Muslims of India. In this perspective, Iqbal argued that separate Muslim state would provide opportunity for Islam "to mobilize its education, its culture and to bring them into close contact with its own original spirit and with the spirit of modern times". (Iqbal, 2000, p.65)

Islam and Secularism: Antagonistic Ideologies

Islam, being a complete code of life negates the concept of secularism, which believes in limited concept of religion as a private matter between God and man. Secularism is defined by Cambridge Dictionary as "the belief that religion should not be involved with the ordinary social and political activities". Word 'secular' has been defined by the same dictionary as "not having any connection with religion". Explaining the term secular, Cambridge dictionary illustrates the sentence: "We live in an increasingly secular society, in which religion has less and less influence on our daily lives".(Secularism, 2008, p.1288) In the *Penguin Dictionary of Politics,* David Robertson, defines a Secular state as "one which has no official ties to any religious movement or position at all." (Robertson, 1985, p.299) Islam rejects this concept. All of the Muslims consider Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) their role-model. Holy Prophet (PBUH) formed and run the government. (Hameedullah, 2016, p.15) This state and society was based upon the religious doctrine. (Siddiqi, 1995, p.13) He was head of first Muslim state established in Madina and after the Prophet (PBUH) four most respected and pious companions of the Prophet ruled and expanded the Islamic state. While explaining nature and functioning of the state of Madina under Holy Prophet (PBUH), Keith Callard quotes the words of M. M. Siddiqi from his book *Islam and Theocracy*:

In Madina, under the Prophet (PBUH), no dual authority existed. There was no church apart from the state, and no organization, religious or non-religious, distinct from the state organization. The state and the church in Islam were merged into a single indistinguishable unity from the moment when the Prophet of Islam took over control of Madina and that early development finally determined the shape of things to come….When the Prophet appointed military commanders, Zakat collectors, or religious preachers, they were appointed as ordinary state employees or civil servants and were part of the state machinery.(Callard, 1968, p.197)

Secularism is the product of evolutionary process in the Christian Europe. It was in fact reaction against theocratic political and religious set-up of medieval Europe, which is remembered in European history as the period of 'Dark Ages'. Theocracy in Europe was based on Christian concept of priesthood. In that system Church dominated the

political system and only priests held the power to interpret the religion. Ordinary Christian is bound to obey the interpretation of priests. In this way it was in fact *Priestocracy* (Rule of Priests), not Theocracy (Rule of God). But in Islam there is no priestly class. Islamic State is not administered by a priestly class—of which Europe had a bitter experience—but by the entire Muslim population in accordance with the shari'a. Dominance of religion i.e. Church over political system was not a pleasant experience for Christian but in the Muslim history, the period in which religion was dominant over politics is considered their most prosperous and golden period. Periods of Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him), four pious caliphs and Umar Bin Abdul Aziz confirm this reality. It proves that formula of religious dominance over political system is absolutely correct. Problem was with the religion of Christianity, which has been tempered and fabricated by priests to serve their vested interests. Consequently it is not purely divine religion in its present form. So problem lies in the ingredients, not in the formula. Dominance of pure divine religion over the political system will always give prosperity, happiness and progress to humanity.

Keith Callard observes that Western political scientists are "usually unconscious of how large an extent of " their thinking and observation is set in the background of approximately 2000 years' experience of the Christian world. He argues that to a person educated in the background of the history of Christian Europe, politics and religion are by definition and nature things apart. But to a Muslim, Islam embraces both of the terms. In support of his argument Callard quotes the observation of a Muslim scholar M. M. Siddiqi, who writes that "Islam,...right from the inception of the Medinite period, ceased to be a religion in the secular sense of the word. It became the ideology behind the State, the creed which was to determine the policy and legislation of the new polity…" (Callard, 1968, pp.194-95)

Quoting *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, Prof. Khurshid Ahmad clarifies that the term secularism represents the concept and activities which are not related to the religion. The word secularism is rooted in a Latin word *saeculum*. Initially it meant generation or age, in the temporal sense. Later the word started to be used to represent the matters and affairs of this world, as divergent from the spiritual affairs and activities in the pursuit of paradise.(K.Ahmad, 2008, p.xv) The term secularism or process of secularization is rooted in the historical experience of Christian Europe, which meant a gradual and continuing departure of approximately all aspects and spheres of life and thoughts from the ecclesiastical direction and religious association. (K.Ahmad, 2008, p.xv)

Secularism is not only a term. Indeed it is an ideology, a way of thinking and a socio-political system. Apparently secularism pretends neutrality towards religion, but in reality, it expels the religion from almost all spheres of life. While analyzing this aspect of secularism, Dr. Anis Ahmad observes:

While inside their churches, synagogues or masajid, the followers are given liberty to show their respect to their God, with whatever name they call Him. But once they are

out of the holy precincts, the same God becomes irrelevant and loses all authority over domains of public authority—economic planning and commerce, governance and political decision making, cultural and social practices, entertainment and legal matters. In short, public space has no place for God. (A.Ahmad, 2008, p.56)

Secularism is based upon the manifest declaration that "Religion is a private matter between God and man." On the basis of this belief secularism argues that religion has nothing to do with the public space. It says that power and guidance of God should be confined to one's private life while all of the other affairs of life—politics, law, business, education etc should be guided by people's own will. In these vital spheres of life "secularism takes man as the only real source for guidance contrary to a revelation-based alternative, which looks upon man in the context of the divine scheme creation and its relation to the Creator". (K.Ahmad, 1998, p.38) Usually it accepts the religion at personal spheres and rejects it in collective spheres of life like economic, political and social systems.(Faryad, n.d., p.1) Criticizing this point of view, a scholar puts forward very valid and rational objections on secular mind. He argues that we should decide either God is the creator of Universe and mankind or He is not. If He is neither the creator nor the sovereign, why should we obey Him in private life? But if he is our creator and sovereign, there is no sense to restrict his power and obedience to private life and expel him from public life. There can be nothing more ridiculous and illogical than saying that a person in his private and individual life is God's creature but when the same individuals get together in social spheres of life, they cease to be His creatures.(Mawdudi, 2008, 214)

First conflict between Islam and secularism in Pakistan was witnessed when in 1949; Objectives Resolution was presented in the country's Constituent Assembly. While presenting the resolution, Prime Minister Liaqat Ali Khan stated that Pakistan was created on the basis of the aspiration that the Muslims of Indian subcontinent wanted to fashion their lives in according to the norms, traditions and teachings of Islam. He added that Pakistan was demanded because Muslims wanted to exhibit to the world that Islam provides solution to numerous contemporary problems and ailments being faced by the humanity today.(Mujahid, 1976, p.2) Rejecting the idea of secularism, he clarified that "Islam is not merely a relationship between the individual and his God, which should not, in anyway, effect the working of the State...Islam is not just a matter of private beliefs and conduct." .(Mujahid, 1976, p.4) Interestingly no Muslim member differed with the speech of Liaquat Ali Khan or opposed the Objectives Resolution. Mr. Bhupendra Kumar Datta, Hindu member from East Bengal opposed the resolution on the ground that the Resolution "has a religious basis" while "politics and religion belong to two different regions the mind.." (Mujahid, 1976, pp.9-12) He argued that politics belongs to the realm of reason, while religion is based upon the faith. (Mujahid, 1976, p.12) Opposing this point of view, Dr. Ishtiaq Hussain Qureshi, Muslim member from East Bengal clarified that:

It has been said that politics and religion should be completely divorced from each other, that politics and religion belong to different aspects of human activity and, indeed, it has been said that one being founded on reason and the other on faith, they should be related to two different compartments of human mind. I would submit most humbly that this is impossible. They cannot be divorced from each other for the simple reason that our reason is fashioned by our faith and our faith is fashioned by our reason...To us religion is not like a Sunday suit which can be put on when we enter a place of worship and put off when we are dealing with day-to-day life. This conception is absolutely foreign to us. (Mujahid, 1976, p.38)

Iqbal on Islam and Secularism

While tracing the evolutionary process of secularism, Allama Muhammad Iqbal observes that it was the protest and revolt of Martin Luther against the hegemony of Christian church-organization in 1517 which culminated in complete exclusion of religion from social and political spheres of Christian world. "The conclusion to which Europe is consequently driven" Iqbal says "is that religion is a private affair of the individual and has nothing to do with what is called man's temporal life". (Iqbal, 2000, p.56) Iqbal categorically rejects this concept. He says:

Islam does not bifurcate the unity of man into irreconcilable duality of spirit and matter. In Islam God and the universe, spirit and matter, church and state, are organic to each other. Man is not the citizen of a profane world to be renounced in the interest of a world of spirit situated elsewhere. To Islam matter is spirit realizing itself in space and time. (Iqbal, 2000, p.56)

Iqbal thinks that separation of religion from politics leads to unjust system of the government. His following verse clarifies it : (Iqbal, 2004, p.374)

<div dir="rtl">

جلالِ پادشاہی ہو کہ جمہوری تماشا ہو

جدا ہو دیں سیاست سے تو رہ جاتی ہے چنگیزی

</div>

[Urdu: Whether it is monarchy or democracy; outcome of the separation of religion from politics is tyranny]

Iqbal observed that "the Quran considers it necessary to unite religion and state, ethics and politics in single revelation..." (Iqbal, 2011, 132) In a Persian poem, Iqbal says: (Iqbal, n.d, p.65)

<div dir="rtl">

ملک است تنِ خاکی و دین روحِ روان است

تن زندہ و جاں زندہ ز ربطِ تن و جان است

</div>

[Persian: Territory (state/country) is the body of clay and religion is the soul. Mutual relationship between the body and soul can keep the body and soul alive]

This is exactly opposite to concept of secularism. In *The Penguin Dictionary of Politics*, David Robertson says that "a secular state is one which has no official ties to any religious movement or position at all. He further elaborates that "in practical terms the term (secular state) has more to do with the extent to which governing parties are really independent of religious affiliation". (Robertson, 1985, p.99)

Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah on Islam and Secularism

Founder of Pakistan, Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah led a popular democratic movement for the establishment of Pakistan. Idea of Pakistan presented by Quaid-i-Azam challenged and refuted both of the dominant western ideologies; nationalism and secularism, on which whole of western political system has been erected. Rejecting the western territorial nationalism, he highlighted the distinctive Islamic identity of Indian Muslims reflected in their Islamic civilization, literature, language, architecture, art, names and nomenclature, calendar, customs, norms, traditions and culture. He sums up that "In short we have our own distinctive outlook on life and of life." (Ahmad, 1952, pp.179-80)

A careful estimate reveals that from 1940 to 1947, Quaid-i-Azaam delivered 90 speeches on different occasions, in which he assured the Muslims of India about Islamic nature of the demand for Pakistan. (Jan, 2013, 326) Rejecting and challenging secular concept of religion, he always advocated and justified the demand for Pakistan on the concept of Islam as a complete code of life and freedom from British as well as from the domination of Hindu majority was fundamental prerequisite for implementation of Islam in every sphere of life. He always tried to convince his supporters as well as opponents that Islam is not a religion in western sense, which can survive under any government as it is only a set of beliefs and rituals and can be professed and performed under any rule. He clarified that Islam is complete code of life, which needs a separate independent state of its own, to create a real Islamic society.

Quaid-i-Azam's views reject the concept of secularism. His statements reflect that he believed in active involvement of religious doctrines into social and political spheres. In his Eid message to the people of India in 1939, he clarified:

Everyone, except those who are ignorant, knows that the Quran is the general code of the Muslims. A religious, social, commercial, military, judicial, criminal, penal code; it regulates everything from the ceremonies of religion to those of daily life; from the salvation of soul to the health of body; from the rights of all to those of each individual; from morality to crime; from punishment here to that in life to come, and our Prophet (PBUH) has enjoined on us that every Musslaman should possess a copy of the Quran and be his own priest.. Therefore, Islam is not merely confined to the spiritual tenets

and doctrines or rituals and ceremonies. It is a complete code the whole Muslim society, every department of life, collective and individual. (Mujahid, 1999, p.8)

Like many other terms, word 'religion' in English dictionaries and Encyclopedias is representing secular viewpoint, according to which religion is just a set of few beliefs and rituals and does not command the socio-political spheres of life. Islam is complete code of life. Quaid-i-Azam clarified once that "When I hear the word "religion," my mind thinks at once, according to the English language and British usage, of private relations between man and God. But I know full well that according to Islam, the word is not restricted to the English connotation." (Ayub, 2012)

Similarly in his address to the Lawyers of Karachi Bar Association on January 25, 1948 Quaid-i-Azam clarified that "Islam is not only a set of rituals, traditions and spiritual doctrines. Islam is also a code for every Muslim which regulates his life and his conduct even in politics and economics and the like." (Dar, 2000, p.123)

Quaid-i-Azam negated the perception of those people who advocated the separation of religion from politics. In his address to the Gaya Muslim League Conference in January 1938 Quaid-i-Azam says:

When we say 'This flag is the flag of Islam' they think we are introducing religion into politics--- a fact of which we are proud. Islam gives us complete code. It is not only religion but it contains laws, philosophy and politics. In fact, it contains everything that matters to a man from morning to night. When we talk of Islam we take it as an all-embracing word. (Mujahid , 1999, pp. 7-8)

Quaid-i-Azam desired and expected that constitutional and political structure of the Pakistan should be erected on the foundations of Islamic principles. Addressing the Shahi Darbar at Sibi in Baluchistan on 14 February 1948, Quaid-i-Azam said;

I have had one underlying principle in mind, the principle of Muslim democracy. It is my belief that our salvation lies in following the golden rules of conduct set for us by our great law giver, the Prophet of Islam. Let us lay the foundations of our democracy on the basis of truly Islamic ideals and principles. Our Almighty has taught us that "our decisions in the affairs of the state shall be guided by discussions and consultations. (Jinnah, 1989, p.142)

Quaid-e-Azam not only advocated the Islamic state, but also explained it. He visited Osmania University in August 1941. Students of the University requested him to explain to them the concept of Islamic state he wanted to establish in the shape of Pakistan. The Quaid replied:

The concept of an Islamic government which should always be kept in mind is that in it one has to obey the Almighty Allah faithfully. This obedience is through the injunctions and principles of the Holy Quran. In Islam sovereign powers are not vested in a king or a parliament or any particular person or institution. The Holy Quran has

prescribed the limits of our political and social life. In other words, Islamic government is the rule of the Quranic injunctions and principles. For the establishment of such government a separate country is must. (Cheema, 2006)

Quaid-i-Azam believed that only implementation of Islamic economic system can solve the problems of Pakistan. In his speech at the opening ceremony of the State Bank of Pakistan, he said:

The adoption of western economic theory and practice will not help us in achieving our goal of creating a happy and contented people. We must work our destiny in our own way and present to the world an economic system based on the true Islamic concept of equality of manhood and social justice. (Iqbal, 1971, p.8)

Many people with secular intentions were creating confusion about the idea of Pakistan, that political and constitutional structure of Pakistan will be secular in nature and essence. Quaid-i-Azam rejected this impression in his speech at Karachi Bar Association on 25th January 1948. He said that he "can not understand a section of the people who deliberately wanted to create mischief and made propaganda that the constitution of Pakistan would not be made on the basis of *Shariat*.." (Dar, 2000, p.123) He clarified that "Islamic principles are as applicable to life as they were thirteen hundred years ago….Islam is not only a set of rituals, traditions and spiritual doctrines. Islam is also code for every Muslim which regulates his life and his conduct in even politics and economics." (Dar, 2000, p.123) Similarly in a Letter to Pir Sahib of Manki Sharif, in November 1945, he says that "It is needless to emphasize that the Constituent Assembly which would be predominantly Muslim in its composition, would be able to enact laws for Muslims, not inconsistence with the Shariat laws and the Muslims will no longer be obliged to abide by the un-Islamic law." (Dar, 2000, p.122)

Nature and functioning of the Law in any state determines its direction. Islam has its own legal system and Prophet of Islam (Peace Be Upon Him) administered the first Islamic state at Madina in accordance with Islamic law. Quaid-e-Azam clarified this in his speech at Peshawar on 26 November 1945. He said:

You have asked me in your welcome address what would be the law in Pakistan. It is absurd question. Muslims have faith in one God, one Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) and one book. This is only law for the Muslims. Islam will be the basic law of Pakistan and no law repugnant to Islam will be enforced in Pakistan. (Mahmood, 2002, p.54)

Islamic state is neither a theocracy nor democracy in the western sense. It is not the theocracy of medieval Europe, where a priestly class representing the God dominated the political system and priests enforced their own will in the name of God. It is also not the western democracy where majority rules without any divine guidance and control. So in both systems whether it is western theocracy and democracy, man i.e. priestly class or majority of the people rules. In this perspective, Quaid-i-Azam

Mohammad Ali Jinnah categorically declared that "Pakistan is not going to be a theocratic state--to be ruled by priests". (Dar, 2000, pp.124-25) Islamic state is formed and run on the basis of popular consent and mutual consultation, under the divine guidance. Quaid-i-Azam thought that Islamic state is true democratic state and this system of Islamic democracy was successfully demonstrated by Holy Prophet (PBUH) and first four rulers after Him. In this perspective, he advised the military officers to "stand guard over the development and maintenance of Islamic democracy, Islamic social justice and the equality of manhood" in Pakistan. (Dar, 2000, p.124) When he was asked that Pakistan would be a secular or theocratic state, he reacted in following words:

You are asking me a question that is absurd. What I have already said is like throwing water on a duck's back. When you talk of democracy, I am afraid you have not studied Islam. We learned democracy thirteen centuries ago. (Burke, 2000, p.15)

Quaid-i-Azam strongly believed that political and constitutional structure of Pakistan should be based upon Islam. In his broadcasted speech to the people of U.S.A in February 1948, he declared that Constitution of Pakistan "will be a democratic type, embodying the essential principles of Islam." (Dar, 2000, p.124-25) Explaining the relationship between Islam and democracy Quaid-i-Azam clarified that "Islam and its idealism have taught us democracy." (Yousafi, 1996, p.2669) In the Lukhnow session of All India Muslim League in 1916, he said that "There are no people in the world, who are ore democratic, even in their religion, than the Muslamans". (Pirzada, 1969, p.375) Quaid-i-Azam believed that democracy is most prominent characteristic of Muslim society. While comparing democratic inclinations of Muslim and Hindu societies, he said that concept of democracy is foreign to cast-ridden and cast-bound Hindu society, in which untouchables have no social and economic status. While at the session of All India Muslim League held in April 1943, he said that "Among you (Hindus), one caste will not take a cup of water from another. Is this democracy? Is this honesty? We are for democracy…But not the democracy of your conception".(Editorial, 1997) Speaking before the London branch of the Muslim League, on December 14, 1946, he clarified the democratic distinctiveness of Muslim society. He said that "democracy is the blood of the Musalmans, we look upon complete equality of manhood. I give you an example. Very often when I go to a mosque, my Chauffeur stands side by side with me. Musalmans believe in fraternity, equality and liberty." (Mughal, 1999, pp.8-9)

Following statement of the founder of Pakistan published in the daily Inqlab Lahore of 22 October 1939 reflects his sincerity for the cause of Islam:

I want to leave this world with a clean conscience and content with the feeling that Jinnah had not betrayed the cause of Islam and the Muslims… I only want that my heart, my conscience and my faith should prove at the time of my death that Jinnah died defending Islam and the cause of the Muslims. (Mahmood, 2002, p.46)

Conclusion

In the first half of 20th century, when almost whole of the western world and many Muslim nations have accepted secular concept of the separation of religion and state, Idea of Pakistan challenged and negated the secularism as it created a state in the name of religion and leaders as well as activists of Pakistan movement expressed their determination to erect political and constitutional structure of new state on the basis of religious doctrines of Islam. The movement of Pakistan was a popular mass movement. Elections of 1945-46 proved this fact, as Muslim League contesting the elections on the slogan of separate independent Muslim state clinched 100% Muslim seats of central assembly. So it was not possible for opponents to defy the demand for Pakistan. However after the creation of Pakistan, a never-ending debate started on the place of Islam in political and constitutional structure of Pakistan. Demand for Pakistan is based upon the concept of Islam as complete code of life, which regulates every individual and collective sphere of life while secularism believes in a concept of religion limited to beliefs and rituals. So acceptance and adoption of secularism means negation of the idea of Pakistan.

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