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Discourse on Nationalism: Political Ideologies of Two Muslim Intellectuals, Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani and Allama Muhammad Iqbal

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Abstract

The chief purpose of this paper is to understand and compare the political ideologies of two key thinkers and leaders of twentieth century Muslim India on the question of nationalism. These thinkers are Dr Muhammad Iqbal (1873-1938) and Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani (1879-1957). Firstly, concept of nationalism has been explored in the political writings and statements of these thinkers. Secondly, debate between Muhammad Iqbal and Maulana Madani over their conceptions of “nation” has been discussed. Thirdly these theories of nationalism have been compared in the historical context as well as in the overall conceptual framework of these thinkers. Finally, the study has been concluded by discussing what the contemporary Muslim world can learn from the intellectual heritage of Iqbal and Maulana Madani.

Keywords: Nationalism, Muslim Nationalism, South Asia, Iqbal, Hussain Ahmad Madani, South Asian Muslims, Muslim Ummah, Millet, Muslim India

Introduction

No two categories have been so heatedly debated in an account of modern man and modern society, be it literary, religious or political, other than ‘nation’ and ‘nationalism.’ Definitions of nationhood and theories of nationalism are widely contested.¹ Bureaucratic establishments of states, political parties, revolutionaries,
and freelance intellectuals construct the meaning of ‘nation’ that best suits their political agendas. Problems relating to defining ‘nation’ have been explored by many scholars.\(^2\) Back in the twentieth century Muslim India produced multiple formulations of nationalism. This article seeks to explain how two principal ideologues of twentieth century Muslim India constructed their ideologies related to nationalism. Allama Muhammad Iqbal (1873-1938) and Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani (1879-1957) were the most prominent intellectuals and political leaders deeply concerned about the future of Indian Muslims. Their theories of nationalism have been explored by linking them to their wider socio-political and religious outlook.

Iqbal’s concept of nationalism is part of his overall discourse on Western civilization. According to Iqbal, popular Western political ideologies should not be accepted by Muslims, no matter how progressive and humanistic they appear, for these political ideologies are rooted in the fundamentally profane and secular spirit of the modern Western civilization. West has gone through a specific experience after reformation. These ideologies are the product of specific time, place, and historical circumstances. The genesis and evolution of these ideas should be carefully studied by Muslims. Muslim civilization, on the other hand, has its own unique ideals and vision. Muslims should therefore construct their own concepts in order to understand themselves and the nature of their mission in history. They cannot truly understand themselves through the categories developed in the West. Blindly accepting these categories will distort the self-image of Muslims and this will be continuation of slavery and colonialism.

https://is.muni.cz/el/1423/jaro2016/SOC757/um/61816961/Benedict_Anderson_Imagine
d_Communities.pdf;  
In order to develop his thesis on nationalism, Iqbal drew on various western thinkers, including Sir Arthur Keith\(^3\) and Lord Acton\(^4\) (1834-1902).\(^5\) Sir Arthur Keith centers the notion of nationalism in racial and tribal identities and, therefore, division of mankind into nation states according to him, was against the Zeitgeist. Lord Acton was a harsh critic of the nationalism ideologies and institution of nation-state. He simply declared nationalism as the pursuit of insane.\(^6\) According to him, modern state is totalitarian and, therefore, oppressive. Secondly, he regarded nationalism as incompatible to Catholicism and modern nation-state, as it is bound to subjugate religion. Iqbal was fully aware of European history and development of political modernity. There are two fundamental assumptions of political modernity. Firstly, political modernity assumes a political space which is independent of religious and private space. Secondly, ‘nation’ is defined as a basic political unit. John Stuart Mill (1806-1873), for example, observes that presence of diverse and heterogeneous national groups can hinder in the development of free institutions in a polity.\(^7\) According to Max Weber, this ‘political space’ lacks in traditional Muslim societies and that explains, why capitalism and modern political institutions failed in developing in the Muslim world.\(^8\) Iqbal was skeptic of highly centralized and totalizing nature of modern nation-state. Nationalism and modern nation-state thus can never be compatible with the spirit of Islam which has a unique vision about the destiny of Man, Iqbal claimed. It is interesting to note that famous Hindu philosopher and poet, Rabindranath Tagore \(^9\) was also against

\(^3\)Sir Arthur Keith (1867-1955) was famous Scottish physical anthropologist, “who specialized in the study of fossil humans. His major works include, *Antiquity of Man, Concerning Man’s Origin and A New theory of Human Evolution.*” *Encyclopedia Britannica*

\(^4\)Lord Acton (1834-1902) was famous English historian and statesman, who remained professor of History at Cambridge university. He is best known for the remark, “Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.”


\(^6\)Timothy Lang, “Lord Acton and “the Insanity of Nationality,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 63 (1), (January 2002): 129-149.


\(^9\)Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) was famous Indian philosopher and poet from Bengal who was awarded Nobel Prize in literature in 1913 for his long poem *Gitanjali*. 
adoption of Western political institutions and ideologies, like nationalism, for the East.  

According to Iqbal nationalism in Europe was the result of the reformation movement led by Martin Luther. Catholic Church, despite of being corrupt was providing a common moral force to the entire Europe. Although not consciously intended, one of the consequences of Lutheran movement was the loss of the common moral force which transformed into a central religious authority. Multiple churches appeared in place of Catholic Church and this phenomenon provided Europe with exact conditions for the rise of various rival nationalities. Enlightenment thinkers, like Rousseau and Voltaire, further diluted the moral force of religion by attacking the institution and the dogma of the Church. This was the historical and intellectual backdrop of the rise of nationalism in Europe.

That is the reason Iqbal’s concept of freedom from the British is not just limited to the end of British rule in India. He is more concerned about intellectual slavery in the form of continuation of Western ideologies and political institutions. In his presidential address in All India Muslim Conference in 1932, he categorically stated, “The present struggle in India is sometimes described as India’s revolt against the West. I do not think it is a revolt against the West; for the people of India are demanding the very institutions which the West stands for.”

According to Iqbal, Islam as a moral force cannot be reduced to private sphere of individuals only, as it is also the cornerstone of modern nation-state system. Nationalism would eventually lead to atheism and thus the common thread amongst the citizens of modern nation-state will be their ‘irreligiousness.’ Iqbal also emphasized on the works or writings of Hegel (1770-1831), a famous German philosopher, who highlighted the spiritual character of nations. Thus, Iqbal thinks that only religion and faith can provide secure foundations to a social order. Nationalism weakens this foundation which is a loss for social organism and humanity. He rather thinks that this is exactly the principal mission of Islam to break the idols of race, color and nationality.

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10 Rabindranath Tagore, *Nationalism* (New Delhi, 1994).
13 Ibid.
Islam, according to Iqbal, presents a unique relationship between individual and society. The formulation of the relationship between the individual and society is one of the central questions for any social order. Iqbal sought to explain this relationship in his two famous mystical poems *Asrār e Khudi* and *Rumūz e Bekhudi*. In *Asrār e Khudi*, stages and conditions for the development of Khudi (higher Self) in an individual have been discussed, while in *Rumūz e Bekhudi* he emphasized on the potential of this higher Self (Khudi) which could only be actualized when an individual becomes a member of the society. Thus, it is through a human group, community or society that an individual nourishes or enlightens his soul. But this is possible only when social order itself is based on spiritual ideals. Iqbal considers ummah as a spiritual community that helps in the transformation and development of this Self.

This is known that there was a paradigm shift in Iqbal’s discourse on nationalism. Before 1908, we can trace the elements of composite Indian nationalism in the poetry of Iqbal. His poems like *Hindustani Bachon Ka Qaumi Geet* [The National Anthem for the Indian Children] and *Naya Shawala* [A New Altar] indicate contradictory early views of Iqbal on nationalism. But later, Iqbal revisited his views after a thorough study and in depth analysis of the philosophical outlook and the historical movements which paved the way for nationalism in Europe. Iqbal declared nationalism as an enemy of Islam in the latter stages of his life. He through his poetry and prose said that humanity cannot unite by first dividing it into rival nations and then creating a league of nations. That is why he was critical of League of Nations. In his poem “*Makkah and Geneva*” he says:

“In the present age in which the company of nations is common,
Hidden from sight is the unity of Adam;
Differentiation is the aim of Western governance,
The purpose of Islam is only the community of Adam.
Mecca has sent this message to the men of Geneva:

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15 *Asrār-e-Khudi* is the first philosophical long Persian poem of Iqbal published in 1915. It has been translated by Reynold A. Nicholson as *Secrets of the Self* (Cosimo Classics, 1920) [http://www.allamaiqbal.com/works/poetry/persian/asrar/translation/01secretsoftheself.pdf](http://www.allamaiqbal.com/works/poetry/persian/asrar/translation/01secretsoftheself.pdf)
17 League of Nations was an international organization created after First World War (1914-1918) to resolve international disputes. Its headquarters were in Geneva, Switzerland.
The association of nations or the association of Adam?\textsuperscript{18}

Iqbal also placed nationhood in Islamic paradigm rather than in territory, language, or culture\textsuperscript{19}. He clearly observes: “It is not the unity of language, or country or identity or economic interest that constitutes the basic principle of our nationality. It is because we believe in a certain view of the universe, and participate in the same historical tradition that we are members of the society founded by the Prophet of Islam.”\textsuperscript{20}

Iqbal differentiates between patriotism and nationalism. While patriotism can be a natural sentiment towards one’s motherland, nationalism is a modern political ideology emerging from atheistic and imperialistic worldview. In his address in the annual session of All India Muslim Conference in 1932, Iqbal clearly stated: “Politics have their roots in the spiritual life of man….Patriotism is a perfectly natural virtue and has a place in the moral life of man.”\textsuperscript{21} He declared “Wataniyat” as an idol carved by Western imperialism and wanted to replace this Wataniyat with the love of Watan in a Prophetic tradition.\textsuperscript{22} In the Prophetic parlance watan is completely different to the political meaning of the word wataniyat.\textsuperscript{23}

Iqbal’s discourse on nationalism is distinct not only from modernists but also from many traditional ulama, who were active in the political struggle against the British rule.\textsuperscript{24} Modernists, like Chiragh Ali (1844-1895) and Syed Ameer Ali (1849-1928), were ready to fully embrace Western political paradigm. These

\textsuperscript{18}Quoted in Iqbal Singh Sevea, The Political Philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 146.
\textsuperscript{19}Latif Ahmed Sherwani, Speeches, Writings and Statements of Iqbal (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 1995).
\textsuperscript{20}Iqbal, The Muslim Community, 16-17. Basically this was a lecture delivered by Iqbal at Aligarh in 1911. Maulana Zafar Ali Khan translated it into Urdu by the name of Millat-e-Baiza par aik Imrani Nazar.
\textsuperscript{22}The Hadith that love of homeland is part of the faith. Muhadditheen have declared this fabricated.
\textsuperscript{23}Irshad-e-Nubuwat main watan aur hi kutch hay
Guftar-e-Siasat main watan aur hi kutch hay
\textsuperscript{24}Iqbal Singh Sevea, The Political Philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).
scholars took pains to prove that the spirit of Islam was fully compatible with the political ideals and structures of the modern West.\textsuperscript{25} Deobandi ulama’s discourse on nationalism, however, is rooted fundamentally in their political struggle against the colonial rule. They were more pragmatic in their approach towards the political realities of the Muslim India. Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani, arguably, is the most important figure in these ulama. Different public debates or discourses between Muhammad Iqbal and Maulana Madani over the meaning and interpretation of nationalism have been explored by scholars and researchers.

Some serious difficulties have arisen in understanding Iqbal because of ‘nationalization’ of Iqbal as a national philosopher and national poet. State narratives have oversimplified the complexity and profundity of Iqbal’s political vision. This is also true in case of literary criticism on Iqbal’s works.\textsuperscript{26} Renowned Pakistani historian K. K. Aziz has taken pains to explain that Iqbal’s famous Allahabad address does not mean creation of a separate homeland for Indian Muslims.\textsuperscript{27} He said, it is important to note here that Iqbal is not against Hindu-Muslim unity or alliance for a greater cause, but he emphasizes that such unity or alliance should not be understood as a composite Indian nation. Muslims can and should cooperate with Hindus but this cooperation is like the alliance of Muslims with the Jews of Madina through Mithaq-e-Madina.\textsuperscript{28} Muslims are a, language or race. Iqbal’s concept of nationalism is fundamentally non-territorial. Any effort to link Iqbal’s theory of nationalism with the creation of a separate homeland for Muslims is thus nation and thus nationhood goes beyond territory self-contradictory. Iqbal does not seek a territory for Muslim nation. He wants to awaken the consciousness of Muslims that they should know their historic role in the unfolding of human history. His theory is a critique of idea of nation-state. Humanity divided amongst rival nations is a disaster for mankind. The force, according to Iqbal, that can unite mankind is Tawheed, as unity of God leads to unity of mankind. Iqbal’s theory, in fact, is too grand and universal to be reduced to just a call for a separate homeland of Pakistan. Iqbal himself seems aware of

\textsuperscript{26}Safdar Rasheed, \textit{Shair, Shariyat aur Fiction: Shamsur Rehman Farooqi ki Tanqeed ka Mutalia} (Lahore: Majlise-Taraqi-e-Adan, 2019).
\textsuperscript{27}K. K. Aziz, \textit{The Making of Pakistan} (Lahore: Sang-E-Meel Publications, 2002).
\textsuperscript{28}Syed Nazir Niazi, \textit{Iqbal Kay Huzoor} (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2012).
this misinterpretation of his ideas. In a letter to Edward John Thompson\textsuperscript{29} Iqbal writes in 1934\textsuperscript{30} 

“You call me (a) protagonist of the scheme called “Pakistan”. Now Pakistan is not my scheme. The one that I suggested in my address is the creation of a Muslim province i.e. a province having an overwhelming population of Muslims in the North West of India. This new province will be, according to my scheme, a part of the proposed Indian Federation. Pakistan scheme proposes a separate federation of Muslim provinces directly related to England as a separate dominion.”

However still many scholars, including S. Q. Fatimi\textsuperscript{31}, Manzooruddin Ahmad\textsuperscript{32} and A. H. Dani,\textsuperscript{33} argue that Iqbal moved from Islamic universalism to Pakistani nationalism.

\textit{Maulana} Madani\textsuperscript{34} was a pupil of \textit{Shaykh-ul-Hind} Maulana Mahmood-ul-Hasan (1851-1920)\textsuperscript{35} and it was under his influence that he joined the political struggle against the British. \textit{Maulana} Mahmood-ul-Hasan was the first student of Dar-ul-uloom Deoband\textsuperscript{36} and he was quite aware and sensitive to the true spirit of this madarsa. According to him, the real purpose of Deoband was not just academic in nature, rather it was political. British had not only captured India from Muslim rulers, they had colonized and fragmented other parts of Muslim world,

\textsuperscript{29}Edward John Thompson (1886-1946) was a British scholar and historian. He was a friend of Iqbal, Nehru, and Tagore. He was father of famous historian E. P. Thompson.


\textsuperscript{31}Professor S. Qudratullah Fatimi, “Islamic Universalism and Territorial nationalism in Iqbal’s Thought,” \textit{Iqbal Review} (1976): 70-103: \url{http://www.allamaiqbal.com/publications/journals/review/oct76/3.htm}

\textsuperscript{32}Dr. Manzooruddin Ahmad, “Iqbal’s Theory of Muslim Community and Islamic Universalism,” \textit{Iqbal Review}, (October 1982): 165-199.


\textsuperscript{34}For the biographic details of \textit{Maulana} Madani see Barbara Metcalf, \textit{Husain Ahmad Madani: The Jihād for Islam India’s Freedom} (Oxford: Oneworld, 2008).

\textsuperscript{35}For the biography of \textit{Maulana} Mahmood-ul-Hasan see \textit{Hayat-e-Shaykh-ul-Hind} by Syed Muhammad Mian, and \textit{Tadhkara Shaykh-ul-Hind} by Maulana Aziz-ur-Rehman Bijnori

\textsuperscript{36}For the history of Deoband see Barbara Metcalf, \textit{Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband 1860-1900, 2\textsuperscript{nd} Ed.} (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002)
including North Africa and Ottoman Empire. War against the British is therefore the most important Jihad of the time according to Deobandi Ulama.37

This anti-British attitude of ulama can be traced back to the famous fatwa of Shah Abdul Aziz (1746-1824), the eldest son of Shah Wali Allah (1703-1762)38 Shah Abdul Aziz declared India as Dar-ul-Harb (abode of war) in 1803.39 Tehreek-e-Mujahideen of Syed Ahmad Shaheed (1786-1831)40 and Shah Ismail Shaheed (1779-1831) was also primarily against the British influence. Later, Ulama also participated in the 1857 War of Independence at the fronts of Shamli and Thana Bhawan. Maulana Imdadullah (1814-1896) migrated to Makkah after the failure of this war. These ulama with anti-British orientation and gravely concerned about the future of Muslims, later founded Dar-ul-ulum Deoband in 1867. Thus, anti-British element was always an important element of Deobandi worldview.41 The purpose was to sow the seeds of struggle for freedom in the Muslim youth, along with their education and character building on traditional Islamic lines. Thus, Shaykh-ul-Hind made a comprehensive plan to oust the colonial masters.

There were two dimensions of this plan. Firstly, there had to be a revolt against the British from within and secondly, Afghanistan and Turkey would have to attack from the outside. This plan was later labeled as Tehrik-e-Reshmi Rumāl (Movement of Silk Letters).42 The plan couldn’t succeed due to several factors and

37 Farhat Tabassum, Deoband Ulema's Movement for the Freedom of India (New Delhi: Jami'at Ulama-i-Hind, 2006).
38 Mushirulhaq, Shah Abdul Aziz, His Life and Time (Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, 1995).
39 Multiple interpretations of this fatwa exist however. Political ulama, like Syed Muhammad Mian, emphasize the political implications of this fatwa. Ayesha Jalal (Jalal 2010) concludes that the fatwa was basically to guide Muslim population regarding their dealings in matters of riba (interest). Barbara Metcalf (Metcalf 1982) suggests that the fatwa was intended to indicate the role of ulama to guide Muslim masses in the changed circumstances. Marc Gaborieau (quoted in A Muslim Conspiracy in British India? by Chandra Mallampalli) also observes that this fatwa was not a call for Jihād.
40 See Saiyid Ahmad Shahid: His Life and Mission by Mohiuddin Ahmad and the volume 6 of Tarikh-e-Da’wat o Azeemat by Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi, and Syed Ahmad Shaheed by Ghulam Rasul Mehr (urdu)
42 For the details of this important chapter of history see Naqsh-e-Hayat by Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani, Tahreek-e-Shaykh-ul-Hind by Syed Muhammad Mian. The later work has been translated into English by Muhammadullah Qasmi as Silken Letters
Maulana Mahmood-ul-Hasan and Maulana Madani were arrested and imprisoned at Malta in 1916. At Malta they got an opportunity to interact and discuss ideas with freedom fighters and revolutionaries from other areas. Internment provided them a good opportunity to study, talk and think. After their release in 1920, these leaders founded their political struggle on the principles of non-violence and participation in the mainstream nationalist politics. Shaykh-ul-Hind supported Gandhi’s Non-cooperation Movement. After the death of Shaykh-ul-Hind in November 1920, Maulana Madani became his successor. Maulana Madani remained president of Jamiat Ulama-e-Hind from 1920 till his death in 1957.

Barbara Metcalf describes Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani as an “argumentative Indian,” a term she borrows from Amartya Sen. Metcalf exposes the artificiality and superficiality of the categories of Muallah and Modern. Mullah is assumed to be the opposite of Modern. Mullah is imagined as irrational, conservative and intolerant, while modern is labeled as rational, progressive and tolerant. She said, “His religious and political thought demonstrates the profound strand of what might be called contextually based reasoning that can be seen as typical of the traditionalist ulama in contrast to the blind conservatism often


43There are two important sources for these ulama’s imprisonment at Malta. One is Aseer-e-Malta by Mailana Hussain Ahmad Madani and the other is Aseeran-e-Malta by Syed Muhammad Mian. The later work has been translated into English by Mohammad Anwar Hussein and Hassan Imam as Prisoners of Malta, published by Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind.

44Hussain Ahmed Madani, Aseer-e-Malta (Deoband: Rashid Company, n.d.)

45For the details see Jamiatul Ulama Kia Hay? by Syed Muhammad Mian (New Delhi: Jamiatul Ulama-e-Hind)


attributed to them.” According to Yohannan Friedmann and Aijaz Ahmad, it is a great paradox of Muslim India that traditional religious ulama supported composite Indian nationalism, while modernists trained in Aligarh, Cambridge and Lincoln’s Inn supported Muslim separatism.

According to Maūlana Madani, homeland is generally accepted as the basis of national identity and all the religious communities living in a particular area are regarded as a Qaīm or nation. As far as India is concerned, all its difficulties, according to Maūlana Madani, primarily arise from its political slavery. Therefore, resistance against this political slavery is the real task faced by all Indians whether Muslims or Hindus. Both the communities are part of composite Indian nation. It is only through composite Indian nationalism that British can be defeated. According to Maūlana Madani, Mithāq-e-Madina (Convent of Madina) provides the foundation for alliance and cooperation with non-Muslims in the struggle against British imperialism.

While in prison, Maūlana Madani wrote his biography Naqsh-e-Hayat. More than his personal account, the book explains how India has suffered under the British rule. Truly patriotic to his soil, Maūlana Madani also composed a booklet Hamara Hindustan aur us kay Faza'il [Our India and her Qualities] describing the significance and virtues of India and discussing that Muslims have a legitimate claim on Indian soil and they are the original inhabitants of the land, thus refuting the extremist Hindus of Hindutva, who declared Muslims as foreigners.

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54 Hussain Ahmad Madni, Hamara Hindustan aur us kay Faza'il (New Delhi: Jamii’at Ulama-i-Hind, n.d.)
Thus the struggle against British imperialism was, in Maulana Madani’s view, a sacred struggle or a Jihad, an act of worship for Muslims and Muslims; hence they must co-operate with non-Muslims in this struggle. He also believed that any separatism in this regard would only benefit the British rulers. This was also the reason of his skepticism towards the political struggles of All India Muslim League.\textsuperscript{55} Along with politics of anti-colonialism, Maulana Madani was also aware of the particular problems of Muslims of India and he himself used to travel to distant poor regions of Muslim Bengal for the social and spiritual uplift of Muslims. According to Barbara Metcalf, “He taught not only religious practice, narrowly defined, but also discipline and organization for protection, dispute resolution, and participation in political processions and protests.”\textsuperscript{56}

In January 8, 1938 in a political meeting in Delhi, Maulana Madani gave a statement that nations are defined by territory.\textsuperscript{57} In the next day Urdu newspapers declared that Maulana Madani related the concept of ‘Millet’ with land.\textsuperscript{58} Iqbal, while not in good physical health, was shocked and instead of clarifying the point from Maulana Madani, composed vitriolic poetry in Persian. Perhaps he never felt the need to consult Maulana Madani, as he was always opposed to the politics of “nationalist ulama” which was also visible in his informal conversation recorded by Syed Nazir Niazi during his last years.\textsuperscript{59} It means that Iqbal was clearly and profoundly in disagreement with Maulana Madani and it was not just an incidental episode which created the disagreement.

The incident just gave a spark to the already established views both of Maulana Madani and Iqbal. It is also misleading to view this disagreement

\textsuperscript{55}However, in the elections of 1937, Maūlana Madani cooperated with Muslim League with the promise from Muhammad Ali Jinnah that Muslim League would soon break with the feudal class. This promise was not fulfilled according to Maūlana Madani and he broke away from Muslim League. See Maktubāt-e-Shaykhul Islam compiled by Najmuddin Islahi

\textsuperscript{56}Barbara D. Metcalf, “Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani and the Jamii’at Ulama-i-Hind,” In Muslims against the Muslim League, editors, Megan Eaton Robb Ali Usman Qasmi, 41.

\textsuperscript{57}“Qaumain Autan say banti hain.”

\textsuperscript{58}Barbara Metcalf and Muhammad Qasim Zaman, Islam in Pakistan (Princeton 2018) comment that this was a misreporting of newspapers and Iqbal picked a misreported statement. Maūlana Madani never said that “Millet” or a religious community was defined by territory, he used the word “Qaum.” But we should also note that this is actually the argument of Maūlana Madani. Iqbal does not accept this distinction between ‘qaum’ and ‘millet.’ We should accept that these are two different discourses on nationalism.

\textsuperscript{59}Syed Nazir Niazi, Iqbal Kay Huzoor (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2012).
between Iqbal and Maulana Madani in the light of opposition between demand for a separate homeland for Muslims and an undivided India. Iqbal’s idealistic theory does not accept ‘territory’ or ‘land’ as an element in the formation of nation. If he accepts ‘separate land’ for Muslims, then his theory becomes self-contradictory. That is why ‘Pakistani nationalism’ would be as dangerous for mankind, according to Iqbal, as Indian nationalism or any other nationalism. In his theory, he is against all territorial nationalisms and seeks to anchor nationalism in the higher principles of Islam. These higher principles, according to Iqbal, are Tauheed and Risalat.

An important point is that Iqbal was not triggered to formulate his theory of nationalism on the basis of hatred shared towards Hindus.60 His concept of ‘Muslim Nation’ is positive, in the sense that it is based on the higher moral and spiritual principles, and not on inter-communal prejudices and hatred prevalent during his times. Iqbal was seeing a world of global brotherhood based on these higher principles that is why he was against ‘territory’ as a basis for nation and he challenged the ideas of Maulana Madani. He had chosen Indian Muslim community only as a starting point for his new world. When a European critic criticized Iqbal of the gap between universalism of his vision of humanity and the particular application of this only on Muslim community of India, Iqbal replied:

“the humanitarian ideal is always universal in poetry and philosophy but if you work it out in actual life you must start with a society exclusive in the sense of having a creed and well-defined outline, but ever enlarging its limits by example and persuasion. Such a society in my belief is Islam…All men and not Muslims alone are meant for the Kingdom of God on earth, provided they say goodbye to their idols of race and nationality and treat one another as personalities…” 61

Although as a Universalist, Iqbal’s practical focus was on Muslim community of India and not on brotherhood of Islam62. Three months before his death, during his interview to All India Radio: “Only one unity is dependable, and that unity is the brotherhood of man, which is above race, nationality, color or language……so long as men do not demonstrate by their actions that they believe that the whole

61Muhammad Iqbal, Thoughts and Reflections of Iqbal, Edited by S. A. Vahid (Lahore: Shaikh Muhammad Ashraf, 1964).
world is the family of God….the beautiful ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity will never materialize.”

Annemarie Schimmel called Iqbal’s discourse as “supra-nationalism of Islam” The last article written by Iqbal was also a defense of this supra-nationalism of Islam against Maulana Madani’s views on nationalism.

Iqbal’s vitriolic verses against Maulana Madani created a controversy. Maulana Madani composed his ideas and presented them in Mutthahida Qaumiyat Aur Islam. Maulana Madani in his work differentiated between ‘millet’ and ‘qaum.’ While ‘millet’ is based on religion, ‘qaum’ is based on language, culture and territory. According to Maulana Madani, there is no contradiction between these two identities. In his work, Maulana makes a semantic analysis of the terms ‘millet,’ ‘qaum,’ and ‘ummah’ citing Arab lexicographers of different periods and also analyses Quranic usage of these words. Maulana Madani’s tone in this treatise is sober, serious, and rational.

This controversy between the two eminent scholars is also an evidence of selflessness and anti-colonialism of Maulana Madani. He simply ignored all the emotional accusations against him and clearly and forcefully explained his point of view. Allama Rasheed Talut, a traditional Muslim scholar from Multan and an admirer of both Iqbal and Maulana Madani, wrote to Iqbal and Maulana Madani and quite successfully tried to resolve the controversy. Through this correspondence, it became clear that Maulana Madani only described the norm of

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64 Annemarie Schimmel, *Gabriel’s Wing: A Study Into the Religious Ideas of Sir Muhammad Iqbal*.

65 Actually the article is not from the pen of Iqbal. Iqbal was on his death bed and was not in a position even to dictate the article. It was written by Chaudhry Muhammad Hussain and then was read to Iqbal and some other people according to Syed Nazir Niazi. Amjad Ali Shakir has analyzed this article in his essay *Mutahidda Qaumiyat and Dou Qoumi Nazriya* which is part of the new edition of Maulana Madani’s work *Mutthahida Qaumiyat Aur Islam* (2006 Lahore).

66 The book has been rendered into English in 2005 by the *Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind*. Translation is by Anwer Hussain and Hasan Imam and Introduction is by Barbara Metcalf. This introduction has been translated into Urdu by Amjad Ali Shakir.

67 Allama Talūt (1906-1963) whose full name was Abdur Rasheed Naseem was a scholar, researcher, and poet, graduated from Dar-ul-uloom Deoband. Died on March 30, 1963, he is buried in Multan. He is remembered as a mediator between Allama Iqbal and Maulana Madani.
his times, when nations were defined as *watan* and not by race or religion. Some brief excerpts from this correspondence clarify *Maūlana* Madani’s position:

“Inhabitants of England, despite being Catholics, Protestants and Jews, are considered as one nation. Same is true of America and France.”  

“I have never said that ‘millet’ is based on ‘watan’. This is strange that Iqbal is declaring that qaum and millet are same.”

“I have been outside India for seventeen years. They consider all of us as ‘Indians’”

“Only composite nationalism can unite different elements and religious communities of India in its struggle against British imperialism. This composite nationalism has always been a thorn in the heart of the British government.”

On February 20, 1938, Iqbal wrote to Allama Rasheed:

“Maulvi sahib has said that these days, nations are defined by *Autān* (homelands). If by saying this he is expressing a fact prevalent in these times, then no one can have any objection because this ideology of Western politics is popular in Asia. However, if his purpose is that Indian Muslims should accept this ideology, then there is a room for discussion, because before adopting any ideology, one should confirm whether it is according to Islam or against it.”

*Maūlana* Madani replies to Allama Rasheed Talūt:

“When I was saying that these days, nations are based on *Autān*, I was referring to the norm and mentality of the times. It is a news, not an advice. I was saying that all the inhabitants of India are seen as Indians in the outside world. Whether Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Parsees, or Jews, they all are treated alike. They all are considered slaves…I have only advised that we all should work for the freedom of India…and I consider this struggle as obligatory, and one must participate in this struggle according to one’s capacity. As far as unity of Muslim countries regardless of race, color and

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69Ibid.
70Ibid., 130.
71Ibid., 131.
72Ibid., 139.
territory is concerned, this is in our nature. I was imprisoned in Malta because of this. This is astonishing that qaum and millet have been declared as one.”

After this Iqbal took back his objection to Ma‘īlana Madani and gave a statement which was published in daily Ehsan on March 28, 1938.

“I have not advised Muslims to accept the territorial nationalism” (Ma‘īlana Madani)

“After this clarification, I have no right to raise an objection to him (Ma‘īlana Madani).” (Iqbal)

Iqbal, in this last statement said, “In deference to Ma‘īlana Madani, I am not behind his devoted followers.” And by this statement Iqbal terminated the debate with Ma‘īlana Madani.

Unfortunately, Iqbal passed away after a few days. His unpublished poetry was compiled and published as Armaghān-e-Hijāz posthumously. The compilers, being part of the bitter political divide of late 1930s included that vitriolic verse against Ma‘īlana Madani in Armaghān-e-Hijāz without any clarification in the light of the last statement of Iqbal. After Lahore Resolution in 1940, the demand for a separate homeland for Muslims became stronger. Iqbal’s subtle political theory was used as a philosophy behind the creation of Pakistan. Insult of Ma‘īlana Madani and other ‘nationalist’ ulama became part of the campaign for Pakistan and Iqbal’s verse and initial remarks were widely used and the last statement of Iqbal was simply ignored.

These excerpts clarify that Ma‘īlana Madani is not advising Indian Muslims to be absorbed and assimilated into one Indian nation and lose their collective existence, reducing the stature of religion as a mere private matter. Iqbal was influenced by ultra-nationalism at the time he was criticizing territorial nationalism. Ma‘īlana Madani’s discourse was based on his sincere and pragmatic analysis of India’s political situation. Muslims should cooperate with non-Muslims in this political struggle on the basis Mithāq-e-Madina (Convent of Madina) in which Muslims and Jews made an alliance in Madina under Prophet of Islam. This is interesting to note that Iqbal himself, in the days when he was responding to

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73Ibid., 135.
74Ibid., 140.
75Ibid., 140.
76Ibid., 141.
Maulana Madani’s statement, suggested that Mithāq-e-Madīna can be a legitimate foundation for the political alliance of Hindus and Muslims of India.\textsuperscript{78}

Iqbal’s concerns are primarily theoretical; Maīlana Madani’s concerns are fundamentally practical. Disillusioned by western political theory, Iqbal was trying to build a political theory of Islam as a theoretician. This theory building is definitely needed in order to develop an Islamic response to modernity. But then there are immediate issues and problems of the ummah which demand an appropriate response but within the limitations of the structures imposed by particular time and space. It is easy to challenge the political modernity in an article in a newspaper or in a verse, but in order to actualize these ideas, one has to participate in the political drama going on outside. Iqbal and Maīlana Madani’s roles in history are perhaps slightly different. One is primarily a man of contemplation; the other is fundamentally a man of action. Perhaps they both are needed, as life is action as well as contemplation.

It is also interesting to note that after the creation of Pakistan, territory and watan became the foundation of Pakistani nationalism. According to Sharif al Mujahid, an important historian, the two-nation theory had lost its relevance after the creation of Pakistan because the two nations transformed themselves into Indian and Pakistani nations\textsuperscript{79}. Ironically this supports Maīlana Madani’s theory of nationalism. This kind of territorial nationalism, in which religion is reduced to private matter, is difficult to be reconciled with Iqbal’s discourse.

A careful analysis of Iqbal’s verse, writings, letters and statements suggests that Iqbal was thinking of another world for the sons of Adam. His political theory and critique of modern nation-state is part of his vision of an alternate world. To actualize this vision, he had high hopes of Muslim community in India. Indian Muslim community is to become a beginning point of his universal brotherhood which, according to Iqbal, can only be achieved through Islam. But perhaps his philosophical idealism and poetic imagination did not allow him to view the limitations of Indian Muslims and political realities of his times. Maulana Madani, on the other hand, belongs to the tradition of ulama that from the times of Syed Ahmad Shaheed (1786-1831) remained active and deeply involved in the struggle against the exploitation of Indian Muslims. His works highlight that he was quite

\textsuperscript{78}Syed Nazir Niazi, \textit{Iqbal Kay Huzoor} (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2012).

\textsuperscript{79}“Two Nation Theory” accessed on August 19, 2019. Available at https://ipfs.io/ipfs/QmXoypizjW3WknFiJnKLwHCnL72vedxjQkDDP1mXWo6uco/wiki/Two-nation_theory.html
clearly aware of the political realities of his times. Finally, they both understood and appreciated each other.

In order to develop Islamic political theory, we need to understand the political struggle of Ulama in the Muslim world as well as the ideas of luminaries like Iqbal and it is not difficult to synthesize the ideas of Allama Iqbal and Maulana Madani, if understood in their proper context. The question of nationalism should be reviewed in all its detail, depth and seriousness without becoming a victim of narrow-minded polemical debates. Going beyond the state narratives and digging deep into the political discourses is perhaps the need of the hour. From Iqbal we can learn his critique of modern nation-state and its centralizing and homogenizing apparatus which stifles individual soul. Contemporary Muslim political theory states that ‘Islamic State’ is a self-contradictory notion and hence impossible.80

Modern state project having absolute claim over power and devoid of all morality is incongruous to morally grounded Shari‘ah based governance. Maulana Madani and Iqbal both appreciated this point and they never advocated the creation of an absolute ‘Islamic State’. From Maulana Madani we can learn the ethical and Islamic basis of struggle against exploitation and colonialism and Islamic principles to cooperate with non-Muslims for the broader peace and fraternity of mankind. The destination of both our thinkers is same and that is a human society guided by higher and universal ethical principles rooted in the metaphysics of Islam. They differed only in their first step. According to Maulana Madani the first step was the freedom of India for which composite nationalism was necessary. According to Iqbal the first step was the creation of a community of Muslims in the Muslim majority land, i.e. a Muslim India within India. But was Iqbal’s community ready for this project? The fact is that Muslims in Pakistan are mainly motivated by materialism and have become westernized culturally. Muslim youth in Pakistan have no understanding about the writings and work of Maulana Madani and Iqbal, despite of memorizing some verses and poetry, it seems that they have never truly understood the message of Iqbal. There is need that our universities, transcending the popular and state narratives, begin a profound study of our intellectual heritage.

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