



Nationalism and Two Nation Theory

Nationalism

The term “nationalism” is generally used to describe two phenomena:

- (1) the attitude that the members of a nation have when they care about their national identity, and
- (2) the actions that the members of a nation take when seeking to achieve (or sustain) self-determination.

(Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2018)

Modern Nationalism is made up of thirteen conditions or beliefs; following are its subgroups.

Emotional Basis

- Common group feelings
- Love for the fellow nationals
- Common hostility to other similar groups

Political and Social Apparatus

- Common territory possessed
- The existence of common sovereign government or the desire for it
- The existence of common moral, social or economic institutions or ideas

Spiritual Equipment

- Possession of some common cultural characteristics i.e., language, customs, manners, literature, art, music and folk-lore
- Common religion
- Common history or common origin
- Common character shared by the national group

Nationalism on the Three Time Levels (Past, Present and Future)

Since nationalism itself is an emotion or a combination of different emotions, therefore, feelings of common pride in national achievements and common sorrow in national tragedies. Simple devotion to the nation such as “My country, right or wrong”. Future level for nationalism is like hoping that the nation will one day become a great nation. And if it is already a great nation then hope for it to be the greatest in the world are quite helpful for the furtherance. Nationalism is always drawn from ideology.

Views of Prominent Personalities about Religion and Nationalism

Mahatma Gandhi said:

“The politician in me has never dominated a single decision of mine, and if I seem to take part in politics, it is only because politics encircle us today like the coil of a snake from which one cannot get out, no matter how much one tries. In order to wrestle with the snake....., I have been experimenting with myself and my friends by introducing religion into politics.”

He was in favor of introducing religion in politics as he thought that the politics is very complicated matter and any issues cannot be resolved without logic of religion.

Allama Iqbal said:

“One lesson I have learnt from the history of Muslims. At critical moments in their history, it is Islam that has saved Muslims and not vice versa.”

Two Nation theory

Evolution of the Concept

During the struggle for political independence in India, the Two-Nation Theory emerged, which meant that two nations - Hindus and Muslims - inhabited the subcontinent. It further emphasized that there were sharp discrepancies in culture, language, religious practices of both communities.

Muhammad Ali Jinnah was not the first to call the Muslims of India a nation divergent from the Hindus, previously, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, had also addressed them as ‘QAUM’. Moreover, the Agha Khan, Amir Ali and others referred to their community as a ‘nation’. Later on, Allama Iqbal provided the philosophical explanation for the uniqueness of the Indian Muslims. However, Jinnah was the first to conclude that Hindus and Muslims are two distinct nations, which could not live together.

Constituent Assembly of Pakistan gave it a legal sanction by passing objectives Resolution in March 1949.

Jinnah in Lahore Resolution

Muhammad Ali Jinnah said:

“Notwithstanding [a] thousand years of close contact, nationalities which are as divergent today as ever, cannot at any time be expected to transform themselves into one nation merely by means of subjecting them to a democratic constitution and holding them forcibly together by unnatural and artificial methods of British Parliamentary statutes.”

Stance of Quaid-e-Azam was *“Muslims are a Nation according to any definition of nation and they must have their homeland, their territory and their state.”*

There were many other people who supported the stance of Quaid-e-Azam. As B. K. Krishna quoted in 1939, *“India is the land of nations”*. Another external evidence who does not support the claim of All India Congress that there is only one nation in subcontinent, *“The reality is that Muslim Population in India go millions, with its own system of law and social organization, its own distinct language, its own historical traditions proves to be separate nation”*.

Mandate of Two Nation Theory

The demand for Separate electorate (SE) was a manifestation of Muslim feelings of separateness. Six years before his death, Sir Syed for the first time demanded for a separate electorate in 1892. Because of the minority status in British India, it was difficult for Muslim candidates to be elected in general elections. If the two communities were not kept apart at polls, every election would result in riots. Wherever S.E had been introduced, it secured peace.

Congress attitude towards Separate electorate was irritating. It could, by no means, compromise with this formula. Congress attitude further pushed the Muslims towards Separatism.

Factors Responsible for the Creation of Muslim Nationhood

Following are the factors that were responsible for the creation of the Muslim Nationhood.

- Historical
- Political
- Religious
- Cultural
- Education
- Literature
- Philosophy
- Art
- Psychological
- National Consciousness