over the last four decades, particularly after we lost our eastern wing in 1971, different interpretations have emerged regarding the creation of Pakistan. While some have argued that the place was ‘insufficiently imagined,’ others have equated Pakistan’s birth with ‘shameful flight’ of the British and yet other scholars are still trying to ‘making sense of Pakistan’. The questions on the nature, origins and circumstances of Pakistan’s birth have also roused considerable interest on the role and leadership of Jinnah - the founder and creator of Pakistan. However, most of these studies have looked at Jinnah as some kind of passive bystander; whether he is portrayed as ‘saviour’, or driven by personal ambition to be the ‘sole spokesman’ of the Indian Muslims, or because there was a ‘vacuum’ and dearth of leaders, hence Jinnah could emerge as a filler or the hostility of the Indian National Congress and Mohandas K Gandhi, that prompted his rise. It is ironic and sad that until 1993, the first volume of his papers could not be published. In Pakistan itself, many continue to see Jinnah, as the ‘uncomfortable father of the nation’. Patrick French has incisively remarked that neither Indians nor Pakistanis seem keen to claim him as a ‘real human being’; the Pakistanis have confined him to ‘an appearance on the bank notes in demure Islamic costumes’... his achievement however, flawed it may be, was phenomenal.

Dr Sikandar Hayat in his updated and revised edition of his book, The Charismatic Leader: Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah and the Creation of Pakistan (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2014) challenges these explanations and interpretations and draws attention towards the centrality of Jinnah as ‘the Charismatic Leader.’ According to the author, Jinnah was a leader with a commitment of purpose, integrity, dedication and unflinching support from his followers, at the most critical juncture in the history of Indian Muslims, offered the ‘formula of a separate state’ that led to the creation of Pakistan. He dispels the notion that Jinnah used the idea of a separate state as a ‘bargaining counter’ to seek concessions from the colonial rulers. Dr Hayat brings persuasive arguments and evidence together to make us believe that during the distressful period of 1920, and ‘30s for the Indian Muslims, Jinnah was the man of the moment; principled and determined, a man with a mission, who had a clear vision and who knew how to accomplish it. He makes a persuasive plea and argument to recast, re-imagine and re-interpret the history of the Pakistan Movement (1937-47) and the studies on Jinnah’s leadership by center-staging him as the ‘Charismatic Leader’, who was visionary, had an eye on the goal and pursued a strategy slowly and peacefully with dedication, determination and personal devotion to the cause.

Of course, this phase of Pakistan’s history is well researched and studied but the leadership of Jinnah has begun to attract scholars only recently. Why Jinnah mattered then? Why is he relevant today and for times to come? How studying his leadership is vital for understanding the adversarial circumstances under which he provided not only hope but a concrete formula to the dismayed and distressed Muslims of undivided India.

Dr Hayat has been researching and refining the concept and theory of charismatic leadership for over two decades and in the process, he provides a refreshing and insightful analysis of the final phase of Pakistan Movement (1937-1947). In focusing on the charismatic leadership of Jinnah, Dr Hayat makes three important
Charismatic leadership

By Dr. Saeed Shafqat

Charismatic leadership through the lens of Weber, Dr. Hayat goes beyond it and weaves the arguments of Ann Ruth Willner, Carlyle and Dankwart Rustow to point out the extraordinary qualities of his leadership and how such a leader is able to inspire ordinary citizens to follow his calling and they exalt him. Charismatic leader has ‘prophetic qualities’, integrity, compassion, commitment of purpose and who is able to evoke devotion among his followers. A charismatic leader has emotional appeal among his followers, who bond, listen and follow the leader with devotion. These are extraordinary and rare qualities which establish an unbreakable bond between the leader and the follower, thus charisma is as much a function of personal attributes but also a follower’s judgment and bonding with the leader. Super natural qualities and myths abound and followers’ allegiance and obedience to the charismatic leader progressively grows. According to Dr. Hayat, among the Muslim leaders during that period (see his chapters 3 and particularly 4 on Leadership Crisis) Jinnah, was the only leader, who had these personal qualities and could establish personal rapport with the distressed Indian Muslims. Thus, Dr. Hayat insists that charisma is a function of both, ‘personal’ and ‘situational’ factors and that aptly describes Jinnah’s role in the creation of Pakistan. In that spirit, Dr. Hayat amplifies the concept, adding that charismatic leader is sober, responsible and rational, and does have ‘passions’ but tempered by ‘reason’. In his analysis and theorisation, Jinnah emerges as the charismatic leader, who steers, guides course of history and events, and the decisions that he makes are ultimately the best.

The masses charmed by this ability, flock around him and follow his call. Invoking Willner, Dr. Hayat reminds the readers that while an ordinary leader may be respected by the followers, the charismatic leader like Jinnah, by sheer commitment of purpose, could compel his followers to act upon his commands...
and obey -this becomes more meaningful when one looks at chapter 4, where Dr Hayat has real hard time developing a typology of social elites, provincial leaders and traditional leaders and Ulema, who in their own right and locality, had support among followers. However, they did not have the degree of devotion that Jinnah was able to solicit from the Muslim masses across regions that were to constitute Pakistan. This helps Dr Hayat to gel personal factor with crisis situation and present a synergetic perspective on charismatic leadership of Jinnah, and how he, through personal following, was able to rescue his followers from the crisis situation. The author is conscious that the rise and fall of a charismatic leader could be ephemeral depending on the crisis’ situation and need of people at the moment (think Churchill at the end of Second World War, Nkrumah at his fall); however, he points out that Jinnah was different as he did not rely only on personal attributes but made consistent efforts to develop Muslim League as a political party-which is a hard sell. He adds theoretical rigour by pointing out how some exceptional leaders are able to ‘routinise’ charisma in a social or political institution and in case of Jinnah, Dr Hayat argues that some of his charisma was inevitably placed in the Muslim League, as the people saw it strictly as Jinnah’s party. Therefore, the attraction of a charismatic leader becomes two-fold: First, there is the allure of their personality, and secondly, even more tantalizing, is the favour of the social positions they can confer, perhaps upon a particularly devoted follower. Such a perspective could rouse greater curiosity and perhaps more rigorous research on various facets of Jinnah’s leadership. Dr Hayat’s updated and revised version stops at the creation of Pakistan and does not reflect on Jinnah as Governor General of Pakistan, could he still be considered charismatic? May be Dr Hayat or some younger researcher could test if charisma holds beyond the creation of Pakistan. The study offers a new angle to leadership of Jinnah and opens up new avenues on the subject. All those who are interested in understanding why political will, clarity of purpose, a sense of vision, mission, integrity and dedication to a cause is essential for leadership, will find the study refreshing, inviting and instructive to understand the woes and future direction of Pakistan.

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