

## **Critical Discourse Analysis of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's (11th August, 1947) speech in the first Constituent Assembly of Pakistan.**

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### **Abstract**

The objective of the current investigation is to analyze Quaid-e-Azam's speech in the First Constituent Assembly of Pakistan through Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). It attempts to ascertain the hidden ideological meanings of his words for the newly born state namely Pakistan. Qualitative methodology has been used for the current study. Although there are different models for CDA as those given by Van Dijk, Wodak and Fairclough yet for the present study the model of Fairclough has been used. The data was analyzed qualitatively by using content analysis approach. The results drawn from the current study reveal that Jinnah wanted to make Pakistan a liberal, democratic, just and impartial state. It also seems that he was fully aware of the social problems like law and order situation, corruption, bribery, black-marketing, nepotism and jobbery, so he persuaded the members of Constituent Assembly of Pakistan vividly to initiate a war against these evils. The study has its theoretical and practical implications.

**Keywords:** Speech, critical discourse analysis, ideological meaning.

### **Introduction**

Quaid-e-Azam is one of the greatest leaders of the last century. In Sub-continent there was no one equal to him in wisdom, insight, intelligence and perseverance. According to Sayeed. K. B. (1998; 227) Jinnah's place and prestige was very prominent in Sub-continent. He was not only a party leader in the Western sense of the term. He was the Quaid-e-Azam--- the Great leader of the national movement. He worked wonders and carved out an independent state namely Pakistan on the map of the world within the incredible period of seven years. It is said that Jinnah had strong power of speech. His words and structures were

never devoid of meaning. They carry such ideational functions, representations and identities as have strong impact on the minds of others.

The features like judicature, terminology, diction and social contexts of political speeches or interviews have been a great interest for critical discourse analysts and applied linguists. A lot of research has been done on the speeches of great leaders of the world. Different approaches have been used in such studies, including: Critical Discourse Analysis (David & Dumanig. 2011; Harvaith. 2011; Adetunji. 2006; Boyd. 2009); Critical Discourse Analysis with the Systemic Functional Linguistics (Kamalu and Agangan.2011; Wang.2010); Political Linguistics, Pu (2007); and check list model (Van Leeuwen.2009). These studies mostly pinpointed the issues of race, racism, identity, etc. Some of them highlighted political matters too.

Few attempts have been made to decipher Quid's speeches through Critical Discourse Analysis. The objective of the current study is to reveal hidden ideological meanings from the text of Jinnah's 11<sup>th</sup> August 1947 Speech (see appendix) which he delivered in the First Constituent Assembly of Pakistan. Although he delivered a large number of speeches having political significance yet the speech of 11<sup>th</sup> August has been chosen for CDA because this speech contains food for thought for the whole nation. It can be considered the first formal address by a great leader to the members of the Assembly.

### **Theoretical underpinnings**

Discourse, an umbrella term, has more than one definition. According to Titcher et al. (1998: 42) Discourse "integrates a whole pallet of meanings". However, the meaning originates from linguistics. Van Dijk's (1977: 3) conception of discourse is to see it as text in context. It can also be considered as "data that is liable for empiric analysis" (Titcher et al. 1998: 42), with its emphasis on action and procedure. Discourse is expressing oneself verbally. Discourses are prevailing ways of knowing, valuing and experiencing the world. Discourses are extensively used in everyday contexts for building power and knowledge, for regulation and normalization, for the progression of new knowledge and power relations and for hegemony. It can be supposed that "discourse" is more extensive term than "text": "I shall use the term discourse to refer the whole process of social interaction of which a text is just a part" (Fairclough 1989:24).

Given the power of the written and spoken texts, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is instrumental for describing, interpreting and critiquing social life reflected in text (Luke, 1997). Van Dijk (1988) adds in it by commenting that CDA is related to studying and analyzing written texts and spoken words to disclose the discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality and bias and how these sources are initiated, maintained, reproduced, and transformed within specific social, economic, political and historical contexts. O' Halloran (2003, P I)

views CDA as a branch of linguistics that specifically searches and identifies the traces of cultural and ideological meaning in spoken and written discourses.

According to Fairclough and Wodak (1997: 271-280) CDA addresses social problems. They are of the opinion that CDA regards: power relations as being discursive; discourse as constituting society and culture, society and ideology in historical terms; that the link between the text and society is mediated, that CDA is interpretive and explanatory; and discourse as a form of social action. The theoretical framework of Norman Fairclough can be considered suitable and appropriate because it provides vast base for analyzing vocabulary, grammatical features, discourse practice and social context from Quaid's speech.

## **Methodology**

Two paradigms namely qualitative and quantitative research approaches determine the direction of a research project, from the beginning to the last step of writing the research report. The distinction between qualitative and quantitative is basically the distinction between non-numerical and numerical data. For the current study qualitative methods has been used because according to Strauss and Corbin (1990) this approach provides better opportunity to understand any phenomenon about which little is known. This approach is also used to gain new insights into things about which much is already known or gain in-depth information that might be difficult to investigate quantitatively.

## **Data Collection**

The script of Quaid's (11<sup>th</sup> August, 1947) speech was taken from the internet, [http:// Constitution of Pakistan | Legislation | www.pakistani.org](http://Constitution of Pakistan | Legislation | www.pakistani.org) (see appendix). This speech was delivered soon after the formulation of First Constituent Assembly of Pakistan. It enjoys a historical importance. The script of the speech was taken with the purpose of doing Critical Discourse Analysis.

## **Data analysis procedure**

The present study uses qualitative content analysis approach for analyzing the data. The choice for this approach is due to the reason that it allows "subjective interpretation of the context of the text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes and patterns" (Hsieh and Shannon. 2005: 1278). It goes beyond merely counting words or taking objective content from texts. It may help researchers to understand social reality in a subjective but scientific way.

## Analysis and discussion

In Fairclough's approach of CDA, there are three analytical focuses in analyzing any communicative event. They are "text" (e.g. news report or any piece of discourse), "discourse practice" (e.g. the process of production and consumption) and "socio-cultural practice" (e.g. social and cultural structures which give rise to communicative event) (Fairclough, 1995b, p.57). These closely resemble Van Dijk's (1998) three dimensions of "ideology analysis discourse, socio-cognition and social analysis", respectively. A serious effort has been made here to analyze the text of Jinnah's 11<sup>th</sup> August speech according to Fairclough's three levels mentioned above.

### (a) Textual Analysis

The first analytical focus of Fairclough's three part model is *text*. Analysis of text includes linguistic analysis in terms of morphology, syntactic, semantics, the sound system and cohesion-organization above sentence level (Fairclough, 1995b, p.57). According to Fairclough, any sentence in a text can be analyzed in terms of articulation of these functions which have been relabeled by him as representations, relations and identities (Fairclough, 1995b, p.58). The text of Jinnah's 11<sup>th</sup> August speech has various textual features. In this article we shall try to analyze those features.

Vocabulary is a very important feature of any text. The words have particular representation or ideational function. They carry particular ideology. So far as the present text is concerned, it includes some words which are ideologically contested e.g. "justice and complete impartiality" etc. These words show that Jinnah wanted to make Pakistan a just and impartial state.

Besides such ideologically contested words, there are examples of re-wording like "As it is, As a matter of fact, unprecedented, I would like to, I know, nation, justice, impartiality, black-marketing" etc. The ideology behind such re-wording is that Quaid had a clear view in his mind that Pakistani society comprises of ethno-linguistic communities like "Pathans, Sindhis, Punjabis, Bangalis" etc. So in order to bring about political integration and security, the role of justice is unquestionable. Over-wording is an unusually high degree of wording, often involving many words which are near synonyms for example, "support and cooperation, bribery and corruption, foodstuff and essential commodities of life, jobbery and nepotism, justice and fair play, caste and creed, control and regulation, prejudice and ill-will, happy and prosperous" etc. The Quaid, through employing such vocabulary wanted to achieve dual purposes, to show his pre-occupation with various aspects of reality as well as portray his stance emphatically.

The main meaning relations in a text are synonymy, hyponymy and antonymy. Synonymy is the case where words have the same meaning. In the text under-discussion there are certain examples of synonymy like “ill-will and prejudice, justice and fair play” etc. These words are examples of synonymy because they are mutually substitutable with little effect on meaning. Hyponymy is the case where the meaning of one word is included within the meaning of another word. The present text has some hyponyms and super-ordinates for example: “(Hindus) Brahmins, Vashnavas, Khattris , (Muslims) Pathans, Punjabis, Shias, Sunnis ( citizens of Great Britian) Catholics and Protestants”. Irrespective of their differences they represent a class and have common interests. Their major concern is the protection and safety of their common interests. Antonymy is meaning incompatibility. The present text has various antonyms like “majority and minority, justice and injustice, partial and impartial, Roman Catholics and Protestants, good and bad, directly and indirectly, low and high” etc. The ideology behind these words is to highlight the differences prevailing in the society and the writer seems to root out these differences with iron hand.

The text of Jinnah’s speech does not show any euphemistic expression. The writer of the speech has tried his level best to use direct and straightforward language to convey his message without mincing words. For instance, when he enumerates the evils prevalent in the society he uses clear words like “bribery, black-marketing, nepotism and jobbery”. He is very loud and clear not only in his ideas but in his language as well.

Since it was an address to the First Constituent Assembly of Pakistan by its first President, so naturally the speech must be formal in nature. It is written keeping in view the prestige of Assembly and its members. One can easily find the words and expressions like “I cordially thank you, the greatest honour, confer” etc. which prove the formality of the text. Although it was a speech to assembly yet the sentences are syntactically well-structured and organized. Paralinguistic features are not used hence the mode is writerly.

Words have expressive value and carry the author’s stance. Sometimes the words explicitly show the author’s stance and at other times the stance is implicit. In the case of the present text the stance of the author is explicit and evident. The Quaid stated that he wanted to see a Pakistani “a citizen of this State with equal rights, privileges and obligations” which shows his stance that he wanted an economic system for the state where everyone will have equal opportunity to live in. It seems that he is advocating a liberal and democratic social set up in the newly formed state.

Metaphor is the representation of one aspect of experience in terms of another. Different metaphors imply different ways of dealing with things. The words “cyclonic, titanic, monster, iron hand” etc. can be treated as metaphors in the current text. The significance of these metaphors is that the author wants to highlight the intensity, significance and vastness of the issues.

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The analysis of grammatical features of the text helps us know about the participants and their identities. The present text has a large number of action (SVO) sentences which involve two participants. One is called agent and the other is called patient. Sometimes, the agent is animate and at other time it is inanimate. Same is the case with a patient too. Some sentences have been picked from the text:

“I cordially thank you”.

“A citizen who does black-marketing does a greater crime....”

One can also find attribution (SVC) sentences in the present text which have one participant, verb and attribution e.g.

“My guiding principle will be justice and complete impartiality”.

Agency has a very significant role in the text. Sometimes the writers knowingly hide the agency so that the responsibility may be made obscure and doubtful. As far as the present text is concerned, here the writer does not show obfuscation of agency willingly. He wants to fix the responsibility on agents and patients unlike the present politicians who are most of the time unclear and ambiguous in their stance. In order to be direct, clear and straightforward the writer has written most of the sentences in active voice. But there are some sentences in passive voice which are very small in number.

Nominalization is the converting of verbs into nouns. It compresses the two processes which are spelt out in the simple sentence in a text. A few words like “dealing, black-marketing” etc. have been nominalized.

Most of the sentences used in the text are positive. However, negative sentences have also been used in a fairly good number. The ideology behind the use of positive sentences is that the author does not want to use involved language. He is exact, clear and direct in his approach and wants his audience to be likewise.

The three major modes include declarative, grammatical question, and imperative. In the present text declarative mode sentences have excessively been used in which subject is followed by the verb. The position of the speaker or the writer is that of a giver and addressee’s position is that of a receiver. There is only one grammatical question sentence that is “Now what shall we do?” In this sentence the speaker or the writer is asking something of the addressee. It is *wh*-question which requires elaborate response by the addressee.

The concept of modality is important for relational and expressive values in grammar. Modality is to do with the speaker or writer’s authority. It is expressed by modal auxiliary verbs like may, might, can, could, should, ought to etc. Here in this communicative event modal verbs like “ought to, could, may, should, must” etc. have been used to signal obligation, suggestion, permission etc. These modal verbs are very powerful as they claim implicit power relations of the sort illustrated here that make relational modality a matter of ideological interest.

Pronouns like “we” and “you” in English language do have relational values of different sorts and the use of these pronouns in the present text has particular relational value. The pronoun “we” has been used extensively which includes the

writer, audience and the whole nation. The use of pronoun “you” carries a particular relational value too. Here “you” has not been used traditionally for enemies or opponents rather it has been used for the addressor’s nation. His purpose may be to personalize or to reach them.

### **(b) Discourse Practice**

Discourse Practice, according to Fairclough (1995, p 58-59), have two facets: institutional process (editorial procedures) and discourse process (changes the text goes through in production and consumption). For Fairclough, “discourse practice straddles the division between society and culture on the one hand and discourse, language and text on the other” (p.60). This may be termed as connective values of formal features of text. It has a partially ‘internal’ character compared with the others, in that it is a matter of values formal features have in connecting together parts of text. But it is also to do with the relationship between text and contexts: some formal features point outside the text to its situational context, or to its “inter-textual” context, i.e. to previous texts that are related to it (Fairclough, 2001).

During the editorial procedure formal as well as contextual links have been used for making the text cohesive. Several cohesive devices used by the writer can be pin-pointed. In the sentence given below a cataphoric reference has been used where “it” is reference item while “bribery and corruption” are linguistic referent (e.g. One of the biggest curses from which India is suffering—I do not say that other countries are free from it, I think our condition is much worse—is bribery and corruption.).

Demonstrative determiners like “this, that” etc. have also been used at various places. One can easily find the use of conjunctions like “but, and, because, otherwise” etc. The use of ellipsis is missing. Most of the sentences have verb form where there is a tense and a grammatical aspect. One such sentence is “Thank God, we are not starting in those days.” Here the tense is present and grammatical aspect is continuous. As it is the text of speech, it has excessive use of parallelism e.g. “You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free -- ---- in this state of Pakistan”. Most of the sentences have theme and rheme in them.

The logical connectors too reinforce cohesion in a text. They show causal and consequential relationship between things which are taken to be commonsensical. They are of two types; causal and consequential. The present text has both types of connectors. “Therefore” as causal while “otherwise” as consequential connectors have been used in the present text.

The current text has complex and compound sentences in a large number while simple sentences are in a small number. This mode of writing shows the seriousness of the occasion. By using coordination the writer wants to highlight

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the facts and figures after the creation of Pakistan and he wishes a roadmap to progress and prosperity for the whole nation.

The present discourse has use of pronouns like “we, I, they” *etc.* in it as grammatical device for referring in a reduced form to material previously introduced into a text rather than repeating it as a whole. The use of definite article “the” in the present text is of particular interest because it is extensively used to refer to referents which are established textually. It also emphasizes the stance of the writer where he makes common or day to day action uncommon.

Side by side textual or co-text links the writer has also used contextual links in the following lines (see first paragraph of appendix). The writer is not mentioning that how this unprecedented cyclonic revolution occurred in sub-continent. It has also not been made clear that under which plan inhabitants of sub-continent been brought under a scheme of division.

Both types of links promote “inter-textuality” in the present text. Constitutive inter-textuality is visible as the present discourse is tied together and one paragraph has link with the other. The speech has attained its independent identity. Manifest inter-textuality is the drawing upon other texts within a text. It can also been seen at the end of the speech when the writer quotes the message received from America.

### (c) Social Analysis

For Fairclough (1995b, p.62), analysis in this dimension pertains to three aspects of the socio-cultural contexts of a communicative event: economic (i.e. economy of media), political (i.e. power and ideology of the media), and cultural (i.e. issues of value).

An effort to determine the social factors that influenced Jinnah to deliver such speech has been done in the following part of the research report.

Jinnah’s 11<sup>th</sup> August Speech is considered as a landmark in the history of Pakistan. It was the first formal address delivered to the worthy members of the first Constituent Assembly of Pakistan by its first President.

As Jinnah was elected the first President of the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan, he was constitutionally bound to deliver a speech to the members. His speech meant to serve two purposes. First purpose was to extend gratitude to the audience as well as the whole nation for electing him as their first President. Quaid’s words were, “I cordially thank you..., by electing me as you first president”. The second aim was to take the worthy members as well as the whole nation into confidence in the context of division of India. He had to utter the words, “I sincerely hope that with your support and your co-operation we shall make this Constituent Assembly an example to the world”.

As Pakistan was a newly born state at that time, it had no constitution, no administrative machinery and no governance. So Jinnah had already thought about



the future responsibilities of the CAP which he told it in these words: “The CAP---  
-----legislation of Pakistan”.

As Quaid was aware of the fact that Pakistan as a newly created state was and would be facing some grave social problems like law and order situation, corruption, bribery, black-marketing, nepotism and jobbery, so he persuaded the members vividly to initiate a war against these evils (see appendix page 2).

There were a large number of elements who were against the division of Sub-continent generally and Punjab and Bengal particularly. Much had been said against this division. So, Jinnah had to respond to this opposition by putting certain arguments in favour of this division and disastrous situation if India would not have been divided.

Until Jinnah delivered this speech Pakistan had become a reality. But the country had population of Muslims in majority and Hindus in minority. Besides this division Muslims further consisted of Pathans, Punjabis, Sunnis, Shias etc. and the Hindus too had Brahmins, Vashvanas etc. in them. Jinnah had a challenge in front of him to put forward such scheme as would pacify all the communities. He had to prove logically and by giving examples that Hindus and Muslims could be equal citizens of the state if they abolish all kinds of discriminations and developed new relationship. For serving this purpose he, in his speech, gave equal status and freedom to all citizens of Pakistan. He also gave example of Great Britain where the citizens had ceased to be Protestants and Catholics rather they were the citizens of one nation.

Immediately after becoming the President of CAP, Jinnah received a message of acknowledgement and appreciation of his services from USA. So he was to tell his nation about this international recognition after independence. So, he quoted that message at the end of the speech.

## **Conclusion**

The main objective of the present study was to find out which linguistic resources were used to project the political ideology by Quaid-e-Azam in his speech. The study was informed by Fairclough's, (1995) concept of Critical Discourse Analysis. His notion, together with some scholars' (Van Dijk. 1988, O'Halloran, K. A. 2003) serves as the main conceptual underpinning of the study.

The results drawn through the current study reveal that the text of Jinnah's speech is very rich so far as CDA is concerned. The textual analysis shows that vocabulary items which include wording, re-wording, hyponymy etc. represent Jinnah's stance regarding ethnicity and prevalent social evils in Pakistan. His vocabulary suggests that he wanted to preach justice, equality and impartiality for the whole nation. The analysis of the grammatical features of the speech suggests that he was very loud and clear in his sentences. He uttered such sentences as fix the responsibilities on agents and patients unlike the present politicians who are ambiguous most of the time in their stance. The analysis of the discourse practice

throws light on the fact that during editorial process formal links, contextual links, logical connectors have been used to make the text cohesive and coherent. The social analysis of the speech tells that it was Quaid" first formal address and through this address he wanted to take the whole nation into confidence. He also wanted to provide a roadmap for the newly created state.

The implication of the present study can be discussed at two levels i.e theoretical and practical. The theoretical position is that language can be used to construct an ideology and influence the minds of the listeners or readers. To this end, it can be asserted that the present study has implications for the theory of Critical Discourse Analysis. Also, the theoretical stance that political discourses are, generally, characterized or underpinned by linguistic expressions carefully selected by speakers in order to achieve a certain purpose or intent and to have a specific kind of impact on listeners was underscored by this study. It was evident in the study, for instance, that Jinnah very carefully and intentionally selected specific forms, words and expressions in order to make a specific impact on their listeners. The study therefore has implications for the theory of Political Discourse Analysis. The study has implications for the increasing interest in research on the speeches of great leaders who rendered invaluable services for the humanity. It provides an impetus for further research in the field.

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## **Appendix**

### **Mr. Jinnah's presidential address to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan August 11, 1947**

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen!

I cordially thank you, with the utmost sincerity, for the honour you have conferred upon me - the greatest honour that is possible to confer - by electing me as your first President. I also thank those leaders who have spoken in appreciation of my services and their personal references to me. I sincerely hope that with your support and your co-operation we shall make this Constituent Assembly an example to the world. The Constituent Assembly has got two main functions to perform. The first is the very onerous and responsible task of framing the future constitution of Pakistan and the second of functioning as a full and complete sovereign body as the Federal Legislature of Pakistan. We have to do the best we can in adopting a provisional constitution for the Federal Legislature of Pakistan. You know really that not only we ourselves are wondering but, I think, the whole world is wondering at this unprecedented cyclonic revolution which has brought about the clan of creating and establishing two independent sovereign Dominions in this sub-continent. As it is, it has been unprecedented; there is no parallel in the history of the world. This mighty sub-continent with all kinds of inhabitants has been brought under a plan which is titanic, unknown, unparalleled. And what is very important with regards to it is that we have achieved it peacefully and by means of an evolution of the greatest possible character.

Dealing with our first function in this Assembly, I cannot make any well-considered pronouncement at this moment, but I shall say a few things as they occur to me. The first and the foremost thing that I would like to emphasize is this: remember that you are now a sovereign legislative body and you have got all the powers. It, therefore, places on you the gravest responsibility as to how you should

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take your decisions. The first observation that I would like to make is this: You will no doubt agree with me that the first duty of a government is to maintain law and order, so that the life, property and religious beliefs of its subjects are fully protected by the State.

The second thing that occurs to me is this: One of the biggest curses from which India is suffering - I do not say that other countries are free from it, but, I think our condition is much worse - is bribery and corruption. That really is a poison. We must put that down with an iron hand and I hope that you will take adequate measures as soon as it is possible for this Assembly to do so.

Black-marketing is another curse. Well, I know that blackmarketeers are frequently caught and punished. Judicial sentences are passed or sometimes fines only are imposed. Now you have to tackle this monster, which today is a colossal crime against society, in our distressed conditions, when we constantly face shortage of food and other essential commodities of life. A citizen who does black-marketing commits, I think, a greater crime than the biggest and most grievous of crimes. These blackmarketeers are really knowing, intelligent and ordinarily responsible people, and when they indulge in black-marketing, I think they ought to be very severely punished, because the entire system of control and regulation of foodstuffs and essential commodities, and cause wholesale starvation and want and even death.

The next thing that strikes me is this: Here again it is a legacy which has been passed on to us. Along with many other things, good and bad, has arrived this great evil, the evil of nepotism and jobbery. I want to make it quite clear that I shall never tolerate any kind of jobbery, nepotism or any influence directly or indirectly brought to bear upon me. Whenever I will find that such a practice is in vogue or is continuing anywhere, low or high, I shall certainly not countenance it. I know there are people who do not quite agree with the division of India and the partition of the Punjab and Bengal. Much has been said against it, but now that it has been accepted, it is the duty of everyone of us to loyally abide by it and honourably act according to the agreement which is now final and binding on all. But you must remember, as I have said, that this mighty revolution that has taken place is unprecedented. One can quite understand the feeling that exists between the two communities wherever one community is in majority and the other is in minority. But the question is, whether it was possible or practicable to act otherwise than what has been done, A division had to take place. On both sides, in Hindustan and Pakistan, there are sections of people who may not agree with it, who may not like it, but in my judgement there was no other solution and I am sure future history will record is verdict in favour of it. And what is more, it will be proved by actual experience as we go on that was the only solution of India's constitutional problem. Any idea of a united India could never have worked and in my judgement it would have led us to terrific disaster. Maybe that view is correct; maybe it is not; that remains to be seen. All the same, in this division it was impossible to avoid the question of minorities being in one Dominion or the other.

Now that was unavoidable. There is no other solution. Now what shall we do? Now, if we want to make this great State of Pakistan happy and prosperous, we should wholly and solely concentrate on the well-being of the people, and especially of the masses and the poor. If you will work in co-operation, forgetting the past, burying the hatchet, you are bound to succeed. If you change your past and work together in a spirit that everyone of you, no matter to what community he belongs, no matter what relations he had with you in the past, no matter what is his colour, caste or creed, is first, second and last a citizen of this State with equal rights, privileges, and obligations, there will be an end to the progress you will make.

I cannot emphasize it too much. We should begin to work in that spirit and in course of time all these angularities of the majority and minority communities, the Hindu community and the Muslim community, because even as regards Muslims you have Pathans, Punjabis, Shias, Sunnis and so on, and among the Hindus you have Brahmins, Vashnavas, Khattris, also Bengalis, Madrasis and so on, will vanish. Indeed if you ask me, this has been the biggest hindrance in the way of India to attain the freedom and independence and but for this we would have been free people long long ago. No power can hold another nation, and specially a nation of 400 million souls in subjection; nobody could have conquered you, and even if it had happened, nobody could have continued its hold on you for any length of time, but for this. Therefore, we must learn a lesson from this. You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place or worship in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed that has nothing to do with the business of the State. As you know, history shows that in England, conditions, some time ago, were much worse than those prevailing in India today. The Roman Catholics and the Protestants persecuted each other. Even now there are some States in existence where there are discriminations made and bars imposed against a particular class. Thank God, we are not starting in those days. We are starting in the days where there is no discrimination, no distinction between one community and another, no discrimination between one caste or creed and another. We are starting with this fundamental principle that we are all citizens and equal citizens of one State. The people of England in course of time had to face the realities of the situation and had to discharge the responsibilities and burdens placed upon them by the government of their country and they went through that fire step by step. Today, you might say with justice that Roman Catholics and Protestants do not exist; what exists now is that every man is a citizen, an equal citizen of Great Britain and they are all members of the Nation.

Now I think we should keep that in front of us as our ideal and you will find that in course of time Hindus would cease to be Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense, because that is the personal faith of each individual, but in the political sense as citizens of the State.

Well, gentlemen, I do not wish to take up any more of your time and thank you again for the honour you have done to me. I shall always be guided by the principles of justice and fairplay without any, as is put in the political language, prejudice or ill-will, in other words, partiality or favouritism. My guiding principle will be justice and complete impartiality, and I am sure that with your support and co-operation, I can look forward to Pakistan becoming one of the greatest nations of the world.

I have received a message from the United States of America addressed to me. It reads:

I have the honour to communicate to you, in Your Excellency's capacity as President of the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan, the following message which I have just received from the Secretary of State of the United States:

On the occasion of the first meeting of the Constituent Assembly for Pakistan, I extend to you and to the members of the Assembly, the best wishes of the Government and the people of the United States for the successful conclusion of the great work you are about to undertake.

Source: Dawn, Independence Day Supplement, August 14, 1999.  
Transcribed from printed copy by Shehzaad Nakhoda

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