
Jinnah and Punjab: A study of the Shamsul Hasan Collection

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During the last four decades historians and scholars like S.S. Pirzada, Nicholas Mansergh, Jamil-ud-Din Ahmad, S.Q. Husain Jafri, Z.H. Zaidi, M. Rafique Afzal, Waheed Ahmad, Lionel Carter, Kirpal Singh, Khurshid Ahmad Khan Yusufi, Sher Muhammad Grewal and Sarfaraz Hussain Mirza have done yeomen's services in publishing rare documents relating to the Punjab of the 1940s and the speeches, writings and correspondence of M.A. Jinnah, the Quaid-i-Azam¹. These documents have assisted the historians to look back with new and fresh perspectives to the politics of the Punjab, events leading to the formation of the sovereign state of Pakistan and the role played by Jinnah. Shamsul Hasan Collection related to the Punjab of the 1940s are other such documents which forms a part of this genre of historical literature. Only a part of this rare Collection was earlier edited and published by Syed Shamsul Hasan himself and later by his eldest son Khalid Shamsul Hasan². However, it is for the first time that I have made a humble attempt to translate, edit and publish the complete text of this rare, significant and wonderful Shamsul Hasan Collection in the year 2007³.

Syed Shamsul Hasan, Secretary, Central Office of the All India Muslim League, diligently kept the records of the Muslim League, private papers of Jinnah, the correspondence between Jinnah and the leaders and workers of the different Provincial Muslim Leagues including the reports of the Provincial Muslim Leagues. On the eve of the partition of India M.A. Jinnah directed Syed Shamsul Hasan to take care of the records at the Central Office of the All India Muslim League and to transfer those records and documents safely to Pakistan. Syed Shamsul Hasan handled this job meticulously even at the risk of his life and the life of his family and shifted all the records, documents

including the private papers of Jinnah from Delhi to Karachi. Shamsul Hasan took personal possession of the private paper of Jinnah and the correspondence between Jinnah and the leaders and workers of the different Provincial Muslim Leagues. These documents were later entitled as Shamsul Hasan Collection and the Shamsul Hasan Collection, Punjab is a part of this significant and rare Collection. Jinnah once directed Syed Shamsul Hasan, "Do not destroy these papers but do not publish them for 20 years so that the Mussalmans must know the difficulties faced in organizing them and the details of how the state for Pakistan was fought and won".⁴

Shamsul Hasan Collection, Punjab was under the personal possession of Syed Shamsul Hasan till his death in 1981. After his death this valuable Collection was transferred under the custody of his eldest son, Khalid Shamsul Hasan and who had reproduced some parts of this literature while writing three of his books.⁵ In the year 2006, this historical treasure was donated to the National Documentation Centre of the Cabinet Division, Government of Pakistan by Zahid Shamsul Hasan, the younger son of Syed Shamsul Hasan. During the 1980s one of my senior colleagues in India had acquired the complete text of this valuable Collection from Khalid Shamsul Hasan and I became fortunate enough to take possession of this historical literature from this Indian colleague in the year 1996. After making a detailed, careful and minute study of these documents it appears to me that this wonderful Collection may be made available to the historians, scholars and researchers across the world so that they may reconstruct the history of the Punjab of 1940s on the basis of this valuable historical literature, hence, the complete text of the Shamsul Collection, Punjab has been translated, edited and published by me.

The Shamsul Hasan Collection, Punjab contains 275 documents in all which begins with a letter of M.Rafi Butt to M.A. Jinnah of dated April II, 1944 regarding the introduction of a daily English newspaper for the Muslim League and a report of the activities of the Punjab Muslim League and ends with a letter from M.A. Jinnah to Malik Firoz Khan Noon regarding the leadership of the Punjab Muslim League Party, dated April 30, 1947.⁶ This Collection covers the period from 1944-1947, which was crucial in the run-up to the partition of the Punjab. On the

one hand the events between the first and last letters of this Collection can best be understood with the help of the other available correspondence in this Collection, and on the other hand the various references and ideas presented in this significant literature also help us to understand, to some extent, the events of some preceding years and the period between April 1947 to August 1947. This Collection is an invaluable source material for the historians and researchers and for those who aspire to study the growth of the Muslim League and the demand of Pakistan in the Muslim Punjab. This Collection provides significant information about the role of the people and leaders of the Muslim Punjab in the formation of the sovereign state of Pakistan. Shamsul Hasan Collection reveals that how the Punjab Provincial Muslim League under the leadership of M.A. Jinnah influenced and shaped the provincial politics in its most turbulent years and has emerged, in a real sense, a body of the Muslim masses.

After a careful perusal of the Shamsul Hasan Collection I would like to single out four dominant concerns. Firstly, the Punjab Muslim League, between the years 1943-1947, emerged as the real mass body of the Muslims of Punjab. The Punjab Muslim League was strengthened from below and its strength simply marginalized the Unionist Party, urban elite, rural landed aristocracy and Pirs and Sajjada-Nashins and eroded their social bases.⁷ Secondly, the national politics and the fortune of the All India Muslim Leagues, its relationship with the Indian National Congress and the *Raj* profoundly affected the strength and position of the Punjab Muslim League. Thirdly, the diplomacy, the tactics, leadership and maneuvering of M.A. Jinnah provided strength and motivation to the Punjab Provincial Muslim League and the Muslims of Punjab and guided them towards the goal of Pakistan.⁸ The political climate of the Muslim Punjab and its association with the diplomacy and politics of Jinnah, fourthly, elevated Jinnah to the position of an icon.⁹

The Imperialist and Cambridge historians, Marxist and Nationalist historians of India and even the nationalist historians of Pakistan are of the opinion that Jinnah and Punjab Muslim League at first mobilized the strong support of the urban elite, rural landed aristocracy, Pirs and Sajjada-Nashins who subsequently won over the Muslims of Punjab for the cause of

the Muslim League and Pakistan. It has been suggested by these scholars that the demand of Pakistan in the Muslim Punjab was based on the vertical mobilization and it was not a mass movement. It has been further argued by these scholars that the Muslims of the Punjab entered to the ranks of the Muslim League either because of total factional rivalries or the changes brought about by the second world war but not to support the popular demand of Pakistan.¹⁰ However, a careful study of the Shamsul Hasan Collection reveals to anyone that Jinnah and the Punjab Muslim League, simply aroused the common Punjabi Muslims, rural and urban, to participate in a powerful mass movement for the demand of Pakistan.¹¹

To substantiate my view point I would like to refer a letter of Nawab Iftikhar Hussain Khan of Mamdot to M.A. Jinnah dated July 19, 1944 stating that, "We are having very great success in our public meetings. You must have read about two big meetings, one in the Skeikhupura district and the other at Montgomery. I attach more importance to the Montgomery meeting because it was exactly ten days after an official meeting, which was attended by Khizar Hayat Khan and Chhotu Ram. The attendance in their meeting was 492 while in spite of all official resistance the gathering in our meeting was decidedly more than ten thousands. Even the big zamindars have discarded the fear and have started attending the meetings freely".¹² This letter is the obvious evidence to suggest that the Punjab Muslim League began to emerge as the Muslim mass movement as early as by the middle of 1944. The language of this letter further suggests that such meetings were attended by the common Punjabi Muslims and only a handful of rural landed aristocracy might have attended these meetings.

In this connection I would like to refer two other documents of the years 1945 and 1946 respectively. On January 19, 1945, Mian Mumtaz Daulatana has reported to Jinnah that, "work in the Punjab is going on very satisfactorily. Everyday the League is getting stronger and closer to our people. We hope to be invincible by the end of the year."¹³ M.A. Jinnah has visited Punjab on the eve of the Provincial Legislative Assembly elections and on January 18, 1946, Jinnah issued a press statement as under, "I was very glad to see with my own eyes that there is a tremendous upsurge and complete solidarity

among the Muslims of the Punjab. I have noticed a remarkable and revolutionary change. First the Muslims do not suffer any longer from fear, complex or dread of the tin Gods of the Punjab.... They have secured a freedom of thought and speech and now these elections have given them an opportunity to act as free men and I am confident of our success in the Punjab".¹⁴

The above observations made by Mumtaz Daultana and Jinnah suggest us that the Punjab Muslim League during the years 1944-1946 had truly emerged as the real mass body of the Muslims of Punjab. The correspondence between the leaders of the Punjab Muslim League and Jinnah of this period clearly reveals that the spontaneous response of the Muslims of Punjab to the demand of Pakistan led to the emergence of the Muslim mass movement. On this issue the Shamsul Hasan Collection contains the correspondence of all the Provincial leaders of the Muslim League, prominent among them were: Nawab Iftikhar Hussain Khan of Mamdot, Malik Firoz Khan Moon, Sardar Shaikat Hayat Khan, Malik Barkat Ali, Mian Mumtaz Daultana, Mian Bashir Ahmad, Raja Ghaznafar Ali Khan, Maulana Zafar Ali Khan, Ghulam Bhik Nairang, Sir Syed Maratib Ali, Nawabzada Rashid Ali Khan, Begum Jahan Ara Shah Nawaz, Lady Vicky Noon, Fatima Begum, Khan Bahadur Nazir Ahmad Khan, M. Rafi Butt and Mohammad Zafraulla.

The historians and scholars like Penderel Moon, Peter Hardy, David Page, Anita Inder Singh, Ayesha Jalal, Stanley Wolpert, Hector Bolitho, Ian B. Wells and Ajeet Jawed have viewed Jinnah as such a leader who followed a cross political agenda.¹⁵ However, the Shamsul Hasan Collection debunks such a perception about Jinnah, the Quaid-i-Azam, especially in terms of his role in the politics of Punjab. These documents suggest that Jinnah and leaders of the Punjab Muslim League were dealing with matters like society, culture, religion, economy, finance, industry, scientific development, press, education and the position of women, thus, adding meaning to the Muslim Nationalism.¹⁶ Jinnah and some of the leaders of the Punjab Provincial Muslim League regularly exchanged their views and observations regarding the industrial and scientific development for the Muslims of Punjab and for the upliftment of the general financial and economic conditions of the Muslim Punjab. Prominent among those who were concerned with the economic

and industrial development of the Muslim Punjab were M. Rafi Butt, Syed Maratib Ali, M.M. Khan, Mohammad Ismail Khan and Adbur Samad Khan.”¹⁷

The Shamsul Hasan Collection assume immense significance in case the historians and scholars may make an attempt to know the views, observations and efforts of the Punjab Muslim League’s leaders and of M.A. Jinnah regarding the modern educational development for the Muslims of Punjab.¹⁸ In addition to the schemes about the educational development the leaders like M. Rafi Butt, Ahmad Shafi, Mian Bashir Ahmad, Professor Abdul Haye and Lady Vicky Noon used to debate the issues like language, literature and the growth of the exclusive Muslim press in the Punjab.¹⁹ A peep into these documents reveal to the readers that issues like diplomatic relations. Foreign affairs and the relations of the Muslim India with the outside world were thoroughly discussed between M.A. Jinnah and the leaders like M. Rafi Butt, Ashiq Hussain Batalvi, M.H. Humayun, Sheikh Gul Muhammad, Mrs. K.L. Rallia Ram, Begum Jahan Ara Shah Mawaz and Lady Vicky Moon.²⁰ The Shamsul Hasan Collection informs to the readers that the issues like making of the constitution and constitutional relations between the Muslim India and Britain also attracted the attention of M.A. Jinnah and the leaders of the Punjab Muslim League.²¹

Penderel Moon, Peter Hardy, Hector Bolitho, Stanley Wolpert, Ayesha Jalal and Asim Roy have all portrayed M.A. Jinnah as a shrewd bargainer of the high politics of the partition of India. These scholars have projected Jinnah as a leader with aristocratic and reticent personality who always moved and interacted within the elite corridors and sometimes would avoid even shaking hands with the people, especially with the common man. Jinnah has been projected by these scholars as such a masterful leader who would always marshal his forces while tightening his grip on the sword arm of his embryonic nation i.e. Pakistan. He has been viewed as arrogating sole spokesman of the All India Muslim League who was always anxious to stifle his customary bable of tongues. These scholars and historians have observed Jinnah as such an adamant, self-centred and ambitious politician and for-sighted statesman who was always concern with his personal political achievements and victories

and was less concern with the real interests and aspirations of the Muslim masses.²²

However, the Shamsul Hasan Collection has rebutted such charges against Jinnah and these documents brings to our knowledge that Jinnah was always communicating with all the sections of the Muslim Punjab and was always responding to the commoners which adds new dimensions to his already and otherwise projected reticent and aristocratic personality.²³ Jinnah was communicating not only with the leaders and workers of the Punjab Muslim League but also with the students, school teachers, college and university professors, scientists, doctors, people from the press, men of the religious affairs, any Punjabi Muslim either with urban or rural background including a motor mechanic from Lahore.²⁴ These documents suggest to the readers that Jinnah virtually emerged as an able organizer of the Punjab Provincial Muslim League and if required would like to answer even a small query from any section of the Muslim Punjab.²⁵ The process of institutionalization of the Muslim League and M.A. Jinnah comes out graphically in this valuable Collection.

After a careful perusal of the Shamsul Hasan Collection it appears to me that during the years 1943-1947, Jinnah became an integral and indispensable part of the Muslim Punjab and its political climate. During this period Jinnah was regularly associated with the each and every level of the Muslim politics and society. The way he guided the Muslims of Punjab on the political, social, economic, cultural, literary and constitutional matters, elevated his position to the status of an Icon in the eyes of the Punjabi Muslims. In order to substantiate my view point I would like to refer two documents from this Collection. On November 20, 1944, M.A. Hussain wrote to Jinnah that, "I write to you as an obedient and dutifull son to a loving father. After all, you are indeed the 'Father of the Muslim Nation' and I think that every Muslim should look upon you as his father".²⁶ On June 15, 1945, Mian Mumtaz Daultana wrote to Jinnah in the similar vein that, "There is no question, Sir, that what you will decide should be best for the Muslims of India. You, Sir, have never made a mistake. Every Muslamans knows that and, if it is for struggle you decide, and if need be against all the powers of the world, then struggle is right and we are prepared as one man."²⁷ It can be asserted on the bases of the Shamsul Hasan

Collection that the love, affection, devotion and concern of Jinnah towards the Muslim Punjab raised his status to such a position which hitherto had not been enjoyed by any one else.

It has been suggested by Penderel Moon and Peter Hardy that the position and strength of the All India Muslim League helped the Punjab Provincial Muslim League to consolidate its position and demand of Pakistan in the Punjab. It has been suggested by these historians that on the eve of the Provincial Legislative Assembly elections of 1946 the Muslim Unionists of the Punjab were undermined by the revelation of the strength of the All India Muslim League and thus they found themselves not to match with the Punjab Provincial Muslim League.²⁸ Similarly, the documents of the Shamsul Hasan Collection also reveal that the fortune of the All India Muslim League, its relationship with the Indian National Congress and Raj profoundly affected the strength and position of the Punjab Provincial Muslim League. The events and activities of the Punjab provincial Muslim League during the years 1946-1947, vividly demonstrated its relationship with the powerful position of the All India Muslim League. To make this issue more clear I would like to refer a part of M.A. Jinnah's press statement on the eve of the arrest of the leaders of the Punjab Provincial Muslim League i.e. on January 26, 1947: "This policy of the suppression and oppression of the Muslim League raises very grave issues. The repercussion of this one more mad and inimical action against the Muslim League on the part of the Punjab Government will be terrific all over Muslim India and I appeal to the Viceroy to immediately intervene and save the situation which otherwise may take a very serious turn for which the entire responsibility will rest with the Viceroy and the His Majesty's Government."²⁹

A study of the Shamsul Hasan Collection brings to our knowledge that the Muslim women with elite background became politically active between the years 1944-1947. Prominent among these women leaders were Begum Jahan Ara Shah Nawaz, Begum Kamal-ud-din, Fatima Begum, Begum Blossom Latif and Lady Vicky Noon. This women leadership of the Punjab Muslim League also mobilized the Muslim public opinion in favour of the League and Pakistan. Lady Vicky Noon, wife of Firoz Khan Noon regularly wrote to M.A. Jinnah about the politics of Punjab and kept him well informed. The

Collection contains twenty letters of Lady Vicky Noon to M.A. Jinnah out of the total 275 letters.³⁰ The Shamsul Hasan Collection reveals to the readers that the correspondence of Lady Vicky Noon always assisted Jinnah to formulate his tactics, strategies and maneuvers towards the Muslim politics of Punjab. Jinnah, on September 10, 1946, wrote to Lady Vicky Noon that, 'Of course, you will appreciate my difficulties in not dealing with the various matters that you have brought to my notice by means of correspondence, nor do you expect me to do so, but I am looking forward to meet you very soon, when I may be able to discuss all the points that you have brought to my notice'.³¹

The Shamsul Hasan Collection also brings to our knowledge that the numerical strength of the women leadership of the Punjab Provincial Muslim League and their number of participation during the movement for the demand of Pakistan was not as large as was of the menfolk. However, in the given socio-cultural environment of the Muslim society, even such participation was a significant aspect in the historical perspective. For all practical purposes the Muslim women of the Punjab were the most backward among all the communities and under the given circumstances it was no doubt a laudable development that the Muslim women, rural or urban, were not only politicized but they were made to take active part for the cause of the League and the demand of Pakistan. The Shamsul Hasan Collection reveals to us that it was largely under the guidance and encouragement of Jinnah that the Muslim women of the Punjab were politicized.³²

Mrs. K.L. Rallia Ram was the most frantic non-League communicator to Jinnah. The Collections contains 27 letters of Mrs. K.L. Rallia Ram to M.A. Jinnah. Mrs. Rallia Ram, an Indian Christian and General-Secretary of the Indian Social Congress was the mother-in-law of Mohammad Yunus, secretary of Abdul Gaffar Khan, the Frontier Gandhi. She wrote to Jinnah on May 29, 1946 that, "Mr. Jinnah should not give up the demand for an equal sovereign state. The oppressed and disgraced of the Hindus must have placed to run to and take shelter. Pakistan will be a refuge for such people."³³ Mrs. K.L. Rallia Ram considered the Indian National Congress as the body of the Caste Hindus intending to establish the Caste Hindu rule in India.³⁴ The correspondence of Mrs. K.L. Rallia Ram immensely assisted

M.A. Jinnah to know the latest political developments in the Punjab and also to formulate his strategies regarding the growth of the Pakistan movement in the Punjab. M.A. Jinnah always appreciated this gesture and wrote to Mrs. K.L. Rallia Ram on November 1946 that, "Many thanks for your letter of the 18th November 1946 and the previous one which I have been receiving. They are very encouraging and full of information, and I thank you for all the trouble that you are taking, and the press cutting sent by you, are very instructive indeed. I shall always welcome your communication".³⁵ However, the case of Mrs. K.L. Rallia Ram is worth probing especially her vengeance towards the Hindus. Historians and scholars may corroborate other sources in order to probe the case of Mrs. K.L. Rallia Ram.

Nearly all the historical writings on M.A. Jinnah are unanimously of the opinion that Jinnah was seriously ill during the last days of his life or rather to say, during the last years of his life. For several years before his death there was a constant tug-of-war between his physicians and Jinnah. They warned him to take long intervals of rest and short hours of hard work, but he did exactly the opposite, knowing fully well the risk he was running. Often his doctors complained to his sister that he ignored their advice.³⁶ The Shamsul Hasan Collection further substantiate the views of these historians regarding the illness of Jinnah. In this Collection, the issue of Jinnah's declining health and illness appears time and again, though the nature of the ailment remains unknown. Syed Maratib Ali, Mian Bashir Ahmad, M. Rafi Butt, Lady Vicky Noon, Mrs. K.L. Rallia Ram, Nawab of Mamdot and Mian Mumtaz Daultana regularly inquired about the health and illness of Jinnah during the years 1945-1947.³⁷ M.A. Jinnah himself writing to Mian Mumtaz Daultana on June 7, 1945 has said that he has several breakdowns during the last few days and the doctors gave him serious warning and strict orders to have complete rest.³⁸

During the recent past historians and scholars have debated the issue of Jinnah's address to the first session of the Pakistan Constituent Assembly on August 11, 1947, where he has stated that, "you may belong to any religion or caste or creed..... that has nothing to do with the fundamental principle that we are all citizens and equal citizens of the one State..... and you will find in course of time, Hindus would cease to be Hindus and Muslims

would cease to be Muslims not in the religions sense, because that is the personal faith of the each individual but in the political sense of the citizens of the State.”³⁹ The Shamsul Hasan Collection informs us that it was not only after the foundation of the Pakistan that Jinnah began to talk about the model and modern State but it was even before the foundation of the Pakistan that Jinnah declared that all the minorities along with the Muslim majority will be treated equal in the new found State of Pakistan. He was, to my opinion, building a Muslim majority state but not the Islamic state. Islamic symbols and religious appeals were advocated by the Punjab Muslim League during the campaign for Pakistan, however, all these were only the tactical move suggested by Jinnah and these Islamic Symbols were not the bases of the movement.⁴⁰ M.A. Jinnah giving directive to the Punjab Provincial Muslim League after the resignation of Malik Khizar Hayat Khan Tiwana in March 1947 said that, “It is the sacred duty of the Musalmans of Punjab to protect the minorities that live amongst them.”⁴¹

What happened between February 13, 1947 to August 15, 1947, the Shamsul Hasan Collection maintains a tacit silence and there is only one letter of this period dated April, 30, 1947. Such gaps are glaring and raised a number of questions especially keeping in view the most deplorable communal situation in the Punjab during this period. Perhaps the events had overtaken the Muslim League and the leaders and the League as a body now found itself unable to check the increasing amount of communal antagonism. The Punjab Provincial Muslim League broke its silence only on the eve of the foundation of Pakistan and on August 14, 1947, Sardar Shaukat Hayat Khan as a spokesman of the League issued a statement at Lahore that, “The Punjab Provincial Muslim League has decided that there will be no celebrations and rejoicing on the occasion of the Transfer of Power on August 15, 1947, anywhere in the West Punjab. The day will be dedicated to prayer meetings particularly after the Juma congregational prayers, for the greatness and glory of the Punjab and safety and well being of the Muslims in the minority areas.”⁴²

No doubt, the Shamsul Hasan Collection assumes immense significance in terms of the study of the growth and strength of the Punjab Provincial Muslim League, consolidation of the

demand of Pakistan among the Muslims of Punjab, the relationship which existed between M.A. Jinnah and the Punjab Muslim League and the emergence of Jinnah as an Icon in the eyes of the Muslim Punjab. However, the information provided by this valuable Collection may not be considered as an all time gospel truth by the historians and researchers. A critical mind and the applications of the modern tools of research in history may be adopted by the historians while reconstructing the history of this phase, which was the most turbulent period of the colonial Punjab, on the basis of this wonderful Collection.

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