
Syed Akmal Hussain Shah*

Sir Mohammad Shafi's Contribution in Pakistan Movement

Sir Syed School of thought played important role in promoting Indian Muslims' cause and securing their interest on All India level. The group, following Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's style of politics, presented Muslim demands before Lord Minto for the then upcoming reforms. Later on most of the demands were accommodated in the Act of 1909. The group formed first All India level Muslim political party i.e. All India Muslim League (AIML) and thus provided solid base for Muslim separatism in India. All future developments regarding Indian Muslims right are linked with strong notion of that separate Muslim identity.

Within Sir Syed's sphere of influence Mians of Baghbarpura, Lahore are standing towerly in annuals of Pakistan Movement. Among 'Mians' of Baghbarpura' Sir Mohammad Shafi is the most prominent figure of his time who played vital role in furthering Muslim League. In this paper an effort will be made to describe and analyze Sir Mohammad Shafi's role in All-India Muslim League.

No prominent published comprehensive works is available regarding his contribution in Indian Muslim politics.

■ Introduction

Sir Mohammad Shafi remained leading figure in Indian Muslim politics during the period of 1906–32. He

* Lecturer, Department of History and Pakistan Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, International Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan

belonged to popular 'Mian Family' of Baghbanpura, Lahore. He started his political career at a time when the old traditional order was giving way to the new, radically different, westernized system of Government introduced by the British in India. Of all the Indian communities, the Muslims in particular, found it hard to adjust to the new order. Following the footsteps of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, there was an opportunity and challenge for him to serve and secure Muslim interests in those difficult circumstances. He remained a staunch supporter of separate electorates for Muslims throughout his political career. In this regard, sometime he, even, had differences with other towering personalities. However, later on, he worked under the leadership of Quaid-i-Azam in close collaboration and struggled hard to secure Indian Muslims' rights.

■ **Prevailing Political Situation**

After the so-called 'mutiny of 1857', the Muslims were completely lost and helpless. The British had ousted them from positions of power and privilege and, in fact, had subjected them to a hostile and discriminatory policy. At this critical juncture Sir Syed Ahmad Khan came forward to rescue the Muslims. He pleaded the case of Indian Muslim rights and particularly their share in jobs and all the elective bodies. The cause of the Muslim community, taken up by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, was advanced by other Muslim leaders, inspired by his ideas and convictions for the betterment of Indian Muslims. Although, Syed Ahmad Khan did not lay down a precise political programme of action for his followers, he still showed them the way to lead them to the goal of their ultimate

freedom in 1947. Shafi was one such important Muslim leader who followed the way.

■ Early Politics of Sir Shafi

Shafi returned from England in August 1892, after doing his Bar-at-law and exposing him to British politics and practices, which was a valuable political asset for any political leader in India. Predictably, he entered the realm of law and politics. He started his practice at Hoshiarpur, with a view to acquire a practical experience of original court work, before commencing his practice at Chief Court at Lahore. He worked hard to distinguish himself in the legal profession. But as soon as he was settled, he entered into politics. In early 1898, he moved to Lahore and joined the Mohammedan Defense Association of upper India (Gopal:1976, p.72) and thus got himself involved with the issues and concerns of the Muslim community. The Association criticized the aims and objects for the congress. Resolutions after resolution were passed against the application of competitive system for the services and introduction of representative system of government in India. Shafi and Shah Din played an important role behind these resolutions. Elective system was criticized, as it was believed to lead to Hindu domination, indeed, separate electorates for the Muslims were demanded in councils and local bodies. (Shafi:1978, p. 1045).

With the advent of twentieth Century, the support for separate electorates had substantially increased among the Muslims. In this respect, two events, the partition of Bengal (1905) and Simla Deputation (1906), played an important part. Fortunately the Muslim constituted a majority in the new province and thus it offered them a lot of opportunities in

various fields of life including education, services and representation in local bodies etc. Obviously, all that development was at the expense of the more advanced Hindus. In exasperation, they took the plea that the Bengali 'Nation' was divided. (Khan:1985, 288). They boycotted the British-made goods and made systematic efforts to pressurize the government through an agitation; Soon, they met with success and Morley, the Secretary of State for India, declared that the government "was about to appoint a small committee to consider the question of extending the representative element in the Legislative Council". (Majumdar: 1962, 220). This declaration enhanced the Congress's prestige, since; this was one of its major demands. The Muslims got worried. They felt that their rights would not be safeguarded in an elective system. In fact, they apprehended that their position would become weaker still, since they were a minority community in India. (Abid:1992, p. 14).

Not surprisingly the Muslims organized an All India Mohammad Deputation to represent and advocate the claims of the Muslim community regarding their representations in the legislature and the public services. Shafi took part in the discussions about the demands to be presented to the viceroy, to help Muslims secure their proper place in the Indian polity. The Deputation waited on Minto at Simla on 1st October 1906. It asked for separate representation for Muslims in Legislative council, district boards and municipalities and an adequate share in services. Shafi, as indicated above, had already raised these demands at different forums from time to time. As one writer explained, "The main points raised were similar to those often advocated by the Punjabi Muslims. Criticism was expressed of the existing system of elections.... A due share

in services was also demanded". (Ibid: p15). The Viceroy's response was sympathetic and considerate implying in clear terms that the "Muslim rights would be safeguarded". But Sir Shafi was not satisfied and particularly unhappy over the fact that the Viceroy "...did not specify that the Muslims would be given their 'due share' in services". (Rakkar: 1985, p.112). That kind of criticism over the viceroy's response showed the great concern he had for rights and interests of the Muslim. It was also evident that separate representation and special job quota for Muslims were some of main concerns of his politics, from the very outset.

■ Sir Shafi's Place in Formation of All India Muslim League (AIML)

Shafi was convinced that to plead the Muslim case on All India level, it was necessary to have a proper and effective political organization. The idea of organizing an AIML grew up during the various meetings, which took place while discussing the Muslim demands for Simla Deputation. In the Punjab, political activities were launched through *Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam*, without compromising in anyway the attitude of loyalty to the British Government. The leaders of the *Anjuman* wanted to co-operate with the Muslim leaders of other provinces in forming a large, national political organization. Shafi and Shah Din represented this group. (Salamat:1997, p. 33). Even before this, Shafi had agreed at several times the need of a political organization to secure and promote Muslim interests. During his stay in London, he had contributed an article to the *London Observer* suggesting the formation of such a political organization for the Muslims of India, to be

named the Muslim League. (Shahnawaz:1971, p. 2). In September 1901, he wrote a series of articles in the daily Observer in which he advocated, again and again, the need for a political organization to safeguard the interests of the Muslim community. He even sketched its constitution, and went on to suggest that it should be called *Indian Muslims Patriotic League*. (Hamid:1963, p.383).

In September 1906, in a special meeting of the Muslim leaders called to discuss the Address to be presented before the Viceroy at Simla, the need for a political organization was again argued very strongly by Shafi and many other leaders. In the end, everybody agreed for number of good reasons. Briefly stated, they were: (1) Muslims were a separate political entity, as characterized by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan; 2) the Congress was essentially a Hindu-dominated organization; 3) an organized response was required to deal with the situation arising out of the partition of Bengal; and 4) the Muslim needed a platform to pursue the demand for separate electorates for all representative institutions. Of course, Shafi, suggested the name of 'Muslim League' which was readily accepted by the participants. (Pirzada:1969, p. XLIII).

To make the constitutions of the proposed League a Committee was constituted, with Shafi was one of the seven members included from the Punjab. (Malik:1970, p. 58).

After lengthy deliberations, the delegates of Mohammedan Educational Congress finally met at Dacca (New Dhaka) and announced the formation of All-Indian Muslim League in accordance with, as they put it, "Sir Syed's scheme of a separate Muslim existence." (Pirzada:1969, p. XLIII). As expected, the Congress and the Hindus denounced the formation of the League. The Muslim demand for separate electorates was the special target.

■ Sir Shafi and Punjab Provincial Muslim League

In December 1907, at a conference of leading Muslims of the Punjab, held in Lahore, it was decided to establish a branch of the Muslim League, in association with the AIML "to safeguard and advance the political interests of Mohammadans in the Punjab and infuse into them a spirit of enlightened patriotism." (Civil and Military Gazette, 5 December 1907).

Shafi was elected General Secretary of the party. It was largely due to his organizing capacity and relentless efforts that within a short period of one year, the number of district leagues in the Punjab exceeded the number in any other province. (Mujahid:1990, p. 351).

Interestingly, Shafi already had an organization by the name of Muslim Association since 1905. He merged that organization with the provincial branch, and re-named the new set-up as the Punjab Provincial Muslim League. (Charag:1997, p. 364). Shafi and his supporters were called the 'conservatives.' The group led by Mian Fazl-i-Husain were referred to as 'progressives.' The *Paisa Akhbar* supported the former group and the *Zamindar* backed the latter. (Afzal:1969, p. 4). Both group now claimed to be the provincial branch of the AIML. However, the differences between the two were settled eventually in the AIML's session in December 1907. Fazl-i-Husain agreed to the dissolution of his organization and joined the Punjab Muslim League Shafi Group. (Pirzada:1969, p. 20).

After the compromise, the 'conservatives' under Shafi assumed the role of representing Muslim opinion in the Punjab. Shafi pursued the case of separate Muslim electorates in the councils and the reservation of seats in government services using both the platforms, the AIML and

its Punjab Branch. Indeed, his emphasis on these two points became a hallmark of his political creed and politics.

■ **Constitutional Reforms (1909) and Sir Shafi's Stand**

The question of "parliamentary constitutional reforms" (Wolpert:1993, p. 22) was under consideration for long, and, along with other Muslim Leaders, Shafi was also conscious of its importance. In the mean time, the Government of India asked for the opinion of various parties on the subject of reforms. In response, the Punjab Provincial Muslim League held a meeting of its Executive Committee in 1907 Shafi drafted and presented a resolution stating:

The Punjab Provincial Muslim League re-affirms its previous resolution to the effect that Mohammedans are in view of their numbers and importance, entitled to adequate and separate representation... Separate representation at all stages is, in the opinion of the League, the only effective method of safeguarding the Mohammedans interests on proposed councils. (Puri:1985, p. 108).

Shafi had great concern over the issue of separate electorates and this was readily acknowledged even by his opponents. Azim Hussain, who wrote a sympathetic biography of his father and of the main pillars of Muslim political leadership in Punjab, Sir Fazl-i-Husain, for instance, wrote that: "Most of the work in connection with Muslim demands was the result of efforts of Mian Mohammad Shafi and Mian Shah Din." (Hussain:1946, p. 98).

The annual session of AIML held at Amritsar in December 1908 viewed Secretary of State for India, Morley's, 'Electoral College Scheme' with great alarm and disappointment, in which reservation of seats was suggested for Muslim instead of granting them separate electorates, simple and pure. However, there was a difference of emphasis between the Punjab delegates and the Muslim leaders from other province, in their reaction to Morley's scheme. Unlike leaders from other provinces the Punjab delegates were critical of the scheme as a whole because of the lack of adequate safeguards for the Muslim. Shafi insisted that no scheme would be acceptable to the Muslim which did not provide them representation in the Legislative Council and municipal and district boards through an elaborate system of separate electorates. He demanded that the scheme should be formulated keeping in mind the circumstances and political conditions prevailing in India. He and other Punjabi leaders were ready to thank Minto, the Viceroy, for his acceptance of the principle of separate electorates, but they were not prepared to ingratiate Morley, who they felt had hurt their vital interests. (Mujahid:1990, pp. 361-62). Despite the differing perceptions, however, a joint resolution was passed thanking both Minto and Morley, but emphasizing, nonetheless, that the Muslims wanted separate electorate and not reservation of seats. (Bahadar:1979, p. 77).

In a series of private and confidential letters to Dunlop Smith, Private Secretary to the Viceroy, Shafi discussed in detail various aspects of the reforms scheme. But, in the end, he pointed out that the scheme was not acceptable to the Muslim. He insisted that 'separate electorates' were the need of the Indian conditions. (Rakkar:1985, p. 112).

While not oblivious to other aspects of the reform scheme, Shafi, in one of his letters to Smith, also expressed his anxiety and concern over the issue of the appointment of an Indian member on the executive councils of the Viceroy and of the Governors of Bombay and Madras. He thought it was a dangerous proposal. Instead, he advised the government to appoint two members, a Hindu and a Muslim as councilors. (Shah:2003, pp. 100-102).

Shafi was against the retention of official majorities in all provincial councils, an indeed, warned that it would give a fresh cause for agitation to the people of India. In his opinion, it was advisable to maintain a small official majority in those provinces where its maintenance was essential. In all other provinces, the official majorities should be dispensed with. But while dispensing with it, the British Government must keep a number of non-official seats in its own hands and should fill them by nomination, if required. (Ibid: pp. 103–105). Shafi strongly suggested the need for a 'Mohammedans' Electoral College' in the Punjab. (Ibid: pp.105-108). Furthermore, he insisted that if appointments were to be made in various executive councils, the Muslim should be given their due share along with the others. (Ibid: pp. 113–15).

Indeed, in Shafi's estimate, the only right was to settle the Muslim claims for representation in the proposed constitutional reforms was to concede them separate electorates in the legislative councils and in the various local bodies. In his letters to Smith, he kept on reminding him, again and again, that the government should not deviate from its promises to the Muslim community. In turn, he continued to assure the government that the Muslims would remain loyal to the British. (Parsad:2000, p. 116). His efforts

finally bore fruit when the government, in the Minto-Morley Reforms of 1909, conceded separate electorates for the Muslim. But, then it was not a full concession. The Punjab was neither given separate electorates nor adequate representation. Shafi was disappointed and distressed. He strongly protested against this omission both from the platform of Provincial Muslim League and the Punjab Legislative Council, and vowed to struggle for the realization of all the Muslim demands in the future. (*Paisa Akhbar*, 11, 25, 27, 28 October 1909).

■ **Congress-League Rapprochement (1916) and Sir Shafi**

From the very beginning of his political career, Shafi was a staunch believer in the separate electorates as well as the separate identity of the Muslim community. Shafi and some other proponents of the 'Anglo-Mohammedan School of politics' had helped in the formation of the AIML to counter the hostile activation of the Congress and the Hindu-majority community. They tried to protect and promote Muslim rights by cooperating with the British. They succeeded in securing separate electorate in Minto-Morley Reforms. They were convinced that these electorates were conceded largely due to their loyalty to the British government. But the annulment of the Partition of Bengal caused feelings of great disillusionment among the Muslims. The failure of the British to help in establishing a Muslim University at Aligarh also disappointed the Muslims. Apart from these internal setbacks, the Balkan Wars and Britain's anti-Turkish policies suggested to the Muslims that they should revise their policies towards the British Government. The 'Progressive Muslim Group' insisted that it was not good for the Muslims

to keep aloof from the Hindus. In particular, they stressed the need to work closely with the congress. Whereas, the 'Conservative Group' also began to criticize the Government too, they were not favourably disposed towards any close association with the congress to help solve the Muslim problems.

Not surprisingly, then, Shafi was not comfortable with the evolving League-Congress cooperation, encouraged by Muhammad Ali Jinnah and many other progressive leaders, which finally culminated in the Lucknow pact of 1916. Shafi opposed the pact because it bartered away the statutory Muslim majorities in the Punjab and Bengal. He had already opposed the idea as a council Member in 1915, when Jinnah had made his first attempt to bring the League and Congress together. More recently, while presiding over the annual session of Mohammedan Educational Conference in 1916 at Aligarh, he tried to draw Muslim support away from the concurrent League and Congress sessions at Lucknow. (Sherwani:1987, p. 282).

Although Shafi lost much ground with the larger Muslim community of India after his opposition to the Lucknow Pact, he did not suffer for too long. Soon, he was appointed as Education and Law Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council. He went on to make up much of the loss through his contributions to the community in this exalted position. In particular, he helped with the establishment of Aligarh Muslim University, a life-long dream of Syed Ahmad Khan and the community. But he also helped with the establishment of a number of other Universities in India to help promote the cause of higher education in the country.

■ **Constitutional Challenges and Jinnah-Shafi Differences**

Of course, Shafi returned to the main stage of Muslim politics soon after his term as Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council was over in 1924. Delhi Muslim Proposals of 1927, in particular, provided him an opportunity to take up the Muslim cause yet again. Shafi, who had represented the Muslims of the Punjab, had fully agreed with the initiative in the soon after his return from Delhi, he changed his mind. He had come to know about Mahasabha's Delhi meeting. (Hayat:1998, p. 106). However, soon after his return from Delhi, he changed his mind. He had come to know about Mahasabha's reaction. He, too, rejected the proposals. In this context, he had support of Allama Muhammad Iqbal and Fazli Husain, who were critical of the proposals in the first place. (Civil and Military Gazette, 30 March, 1927). However, at a general meeting of the Punjab Provincial Muslim League held in May 1927, Shafi strongly condemned the behaviour of the Hindu press and the Mahasabha. (Salamat:1997, p. 301).

He agreed that self-government was possible only through Hindu-Muslim unity but for now, he reiterated, the separate electorates were imperative and, thus, could not be dispensed with. He asked the Mahasabha to be more responsive. Indeed, he warned:

Until the mentality of the Hindu Mahasabha undergoes the necessary change and that body comes to realize that without Hindu-Muslim unity, attainment of Swaraj for our common motherland is absolute impossibility... The Muslim community will continue to insist on the retention of separate

communal electorates as an integral part of the Indian constitution. (Mitra:1927, p. 42).

However, it must be pointed out that there were several other Muslim leaders too who changed their minds, after seeing the negative response from the Congress and the Mahasabha. (Page:1987, p. 148). The opposition of the Muslims of the Punjab to the Delhi Proposals gained strength with the passage of time. Jinnah himself visited Lahore to assess the situation. He did his best "to prevent the Provincial League from taking an independent line on the question of the electorates,... but he failed". (Abid:1992, p. 120). Punjabi Muslims were not interested in giving up separate electorate at any cost now. In addition to Shafi, Feroz Khan Noon was at the forefront. Under his leadership, twenty-seven members of the Punjab Legislative Council made a declaration rejecting the Delhi Proposals. They reiterated their firm commitment to separate electorates. (Civil and Military Gazette, 26 July 1927). The provincial government of the Punjab also supported these views. (Salamat:1997, p. 302).

The real opportunity and challenge turned out to be the appointment of Simon Commission to recommend future constitutional reforms in India. Shafi strongly supported the Simon Commission in the hope that it will protect and promote Muslim interests, especially with regard to the issues of separate electorates and statutory majorities in the Muslim-majority provinces of the Punjab and Bengal. The result was a split within the AIML, the party he had helped found in 1906 and had supported and nurtured for more than two decades. Jinnah faction of the Muslim League, of course, had boycotted the all-white Simon Commission, and

opted to work with the Congress. The Congress had decided to offer its own alternative scheme of reforms.

However, neither the cooperation of Shafi group nor the boycott of Jinnah and his AIML, of the Simon Commission could prove fruitful for the Muslims. The Simon Commission Report, submitted to the Secretary of State for India in May 1930, asked to do away with the separate electorates, with the damning charge that the communal representation was the direct cause of the tension between the Muslim and the Hindus in India. On the other hand, the report denied responsibility at the centre, and even sidetracked the idea of a federation of India. The result was that the Report was unanimously condemned by all Indians, Muslims and Hindus. Indeed, it created more problems than it had set out to solve. The most important problem remained the communal problem. But that was complicated further not only because of this Report but also because of the Nehru Report prepared by Indian leaders, particularly of the Congress, in opposition to the Simon Commission.

The Nehru Report accepted two major demands of the Muslims, that is, the separation of Sind from Bombay and up gradation of the status of the NWFP and Balochistan to full-fledged provinces. But with regard to other two demands, that is, one-third representation in centre and the continuation of separate electorates, it had strong reservations. The Report even claimed that the separate electorates were bad for the growth of a 'national' spirit. (Hardy:1972, p. 212). The Report refused to concede a separate identity and status to the Muslims. In addition, the Report recommended a highly centralized form of government for self-governing India. The proposed constitution was in truth a triumph for the Hindu

Mahasabha. It carried essentially their publicly stated position on these issues. No wonder, most of the Muslim organizations condemned the Report as soon as it was out.

The AIML led by Jinnah, had agreed to joint electorates only in the hope that this will secure the Muslims five full-fledged Muslim-majority provinces, and, in addition, they would also have one-third representation in the central assembly. That was the minimum they required to be able to safeguard their interests. Jinnah, therefore, demanded that the Report should be amended accordingly. In particular, he demanded:

The Muslims should be given one-third representation in the central legislature; the Punjab and Bengal should have Muslim representation on the population basis for ten years, subject to provision of this principle after that period, and; the residuary powers should be vested in the Provincial Legislature and not in the Centre. (Zaidi:n.d, pp. 384–86).

The Hindu Mahasabha and the Sikh representatives opposed any change whatsoever to the Report. The Mahasabha distributed pamphlets and extracts from Lala Lajpat's speech against any revision of the Report. In the light of this intense criticism, the Calcutta Convention was called in December 1928 to review the Report, rejected the proposed amendments and adopted the Report, as it was, without any modification. (Ibid: pp. 36-37). This uncompromising attitude of the Congress and the Mahasabha proved to be a turning point not only in Jinnah's political career but also in the fortunes of Muslim India.

The rejection of Jinnah's amendments gave boost to the standing of the Muslim League led by Shafi. He, along with,

Fazl-i-Husain who had now joined Shafi, took benefit of the situation and propagated that if the Muslims had not compromised on their fundamental interests in the Delhi Proposals, and, in particular had not agreed to withdrawal of the separate electorates, the Congress would not have treated them in such a dismissive and humiliating manner. (Batalvi:1961, pp. 203-204).

Shafi, of course, claimed that his criticism of the Nehru Report was based on patriotic feelings and was meant to be constructive. He wanted to contribute to the peaceful solution of political and the constitutional problems' like all other leaders. In this context, he appreciated the demand of Dominion Status for India, and argued that it would help advance the cause of all the people of India. (Shafi:1930, pp. 69-70). He appreciated that a list of fundamental rights was included in the Report. But, he felt that there was no constitutional guarantee for the security of the regional languages and culture. It was necessary that such a guarantee should be made in the constitution of the country. (*Paisa Akhbar*, 12 November 1928).

Shafi's main criticism against the Nehru Report, as already indicated above, was confined to separate electorate for the Muslims and the demand for statutory majority for the Muslims in the legislatures of both the Punjab and Bengal. Since these were the most important Muslim demands and were even supported by Jinnah who had cooperated with the Congress, Shafi's rejection of the Nehru Report enhanced his political status and standing with the Muslim masses in the Punjab and beyond.

Sir Shafi and his supporters also went ahead and finalized All Parties Muslims Conference to address the constitutional issues related to the Indian Muslims. Presided by Aga Khan,

the Conference commenced its session at Delhi on 31 December 1928. Apart from Shafi, a large number of prominent Muslim leaders attended the Conference. They were drawn from all parts of India, and included, besides Shafi, Allama Iqbal, A. K. Ghazanvi, Mahmud Suhrawardy, Sir Zulfikar Ali Khan, Malik Feroz Khan Noon, Nawab Muhammad Yusaf, Shafee Daudee, Maulana Hasrat Mohani, Maulvi Mohammad Yaqub and Maulana Mohammed Ali. (Mitra:1928, p. 409). He had also desired earnestly that Jinnah should have been there. "He sent him many letter and telegrams in this regard, but to no avail. Jinnah was not convinced..." (The Muslim Outlook, 2 January 1928).

The main resolution of the Conference was moved by Shafi which was passed unanimously. The resolution identified and articulated Muslim demands as follows:

... the only form of government suitable to Indian conditions is a federal system with complete autonomy and residuary powers vested in the constituent states; ... no bill, resolution, motion, or amendment regarding inter-communal matters be moved, discussed or passed by any legislature, central or provincial, if the 3/4 majority of the members of either the Hindu or the Muslim community effected thereby in that legislature oppose; ... separate electorate is now the law of the land the Muslims cannot be deprived of that right without their consent; ... representation in various legislature and other statutory self-governing bodies of the Muslim through their own separate electorates is essential;... it is essential that Musalmans should have their due share in the central and provincial cabinets;... the Muslim majority in those provinces where Musalmans constitute a majority of population shall in no way be effected and in the provinces in which Musalmans constitute a minority they shall have a

representation in no case less than that enjoyed by them under the existing law;... Musalmans should have the right of 33 percent representation in the Central Legislature;... Sind has no affinity whatever with the rest of Bombay Presidency and its unconditional constitution into a separate province, possessing its own separate legislative and administrative machinery on the same line as in other provinces of India;... the introduction of constitutional reforms in the NWFP Province and Balochistan, along such lines as may be adopted in other Provinces;... that provision should be made in the constitution giving Muslims their adequate share along with other Indians in all services;... the Indian constitution should embody adequate safeguards for the protection and promotion of Muslim education, languages, religion, personal law and Muslim charitable institution, and for their due share in grants-in-aid;... no change in the Indian constitution shall, after its inauguration, be made by the Central Legislature except with the concurrence of all the states constituting the Indian federation;... This Conference emphatically declares that no constitution, by whomsoever proposed or devised, will be acceptable to Indian Musalmans, unless it conforms to the principles embodied in this resolution. (Aziz:1972, pp. 53–55).

Noticeably, it was a major milestone in the Muslim struggle for its rights and interests in India. It was also important in the sense that it nullified the impact of the Nehru Report as far as the Muslims were concerned. The Conference itself went on to emerge as a representative party of the Muslims. The Muslim League was badly divided and demoralized. It was much later that the League could emerge as the “sole representative body” of Muslim India.

The Conference was eventually merged into the re-organized League.

■ Resolution of Jinnah-Shafi Differences

Indifference and inconsiderable response to Muslim demands in the Nehru Report moved the Muslim leaders to join hands for the common good of the community. The wide spread opposition to the Report and, above all, the rejection of his own amendments and the success of All India Muslim Conference, affected Jinnah too. In particular, he was disappointed with the Congress and its leadership. But, then, Jinnah was still convinced that the way out for the Muslims was to re-unify and re-organize the Muslim League, the oldest Muslim political party in the field rather than depending on 'ad-hoc' organization like All India Muslim Conference. Soon, Shafi also felt the same way and decided to help and cooperate.

Thus, when the adjourned meeting of the Council of Jinnah's Muslim League was held in Delhi on 28th March 1929, with Jinnah in the Chair, members of the Shafi group were also in attendance. Interestingly, some prominent leaders associated with the Muslim Conference also attended. An hour before the Council meeting, they met at the house of Hakim Ajmal Khan, and after careful deliberations, decided to attend the meeting to lend their support to Jinnah and his Muslim League. Among others, they included Ali Brothers, Shafee Daudee, Maulvi Mohammad Yaqub and Nawab Ismail Khan. All of them came to attend the League Council meeting. (Mitra:1929, p. 362). In the discussions, Jinnah made it absolutely clear that

the Muslims could not accept the Nehru Report. It was against their vital rights and interests. He went on to present his now famous 'Fourteen Points', which were then described as Jinnah's draft resolution. (Ibid: p. 363).

After that meeting, the members of Shafi League met under the presidentship of Sir Abdur Rahim and selected some delegates to meet the representatives of Jinnah's League. With Sir Abdul Qadir as their head, other important members of the delegation were Nawab Mohammad Yusuf and Malik Feroz Khan Noon. Shafi made it publicly known that if Jinnah's draft resolution was accepted by the League, his group would readily join hands with Jinnah's League. (Ibid: p. 366). Although Jinnah's 'Fourteen points' were approved without any difficulty, the re-unification of the Muslim League took a while. (Inqilab, 31 March 1929). But there is no denying that so far as their attitude towards the Hindu-Muslim question was concerned, the two factions of the League were practically united by March 1929. A broad-based committee comprising representatives of all shades of Muslim opinion, including those from Jinnah and Shafi's factions, Muslim Conference, and even some supporters of the Nehru Report were asked to review, critically, Jinnah's draft resolution. They included Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Maulana Mohamed Ali, Malik Barkat Ali, Nawab Ismail Khan, Dr. Shafaat Ahmad Khan and Dr. Saif-ud-Din Kitchlew, (Zaidi: n.d, p. 41) a very representative gathering of Muslim leaders in India at that time. The committee approved Jinnah's resolution and the process of re-unification of the League was soon launched, which was eventually completed on 28th February 1930 at Delhi. (Mujahid:1981, p. 392).

Shafi was pleased with the developments as his point of view was given importance and recognition in Jinnah's

'Fourteen Points.' Jinnah himself readily acknowledged the contribution of Shafi and other leaders when he declared that:

I want to make one thing quite clear. There is an impression that the draft resolution which I put before the Council of the League contains my personal ideas. That is not correct. I have only carried out the task entrusted to me by the Council on third of March to consult the various groups and schools of thought as far as possible and place before them a draft which would command the support of a large body of people. I have therefore, taken the ideas from various persons in accordance with these instructions and to the best of my ability and judgment, I have tried to place a draft which in my opinion carries with it the majority's opinion. (Mitra:1929, p. 367).

■ **Sir Shafi and Round-Table Conference (1930–32)**

The need for constitutional reforms was more than obvious now that both the Simon Commission and Nehru Report had failed to deliver. The Labour Government, therefore, announced in October 1929, its plan to hold Round Table Conference in London to solve the constitutional problem of India. In the First (10th November to 19th January 1931) and Second Conference (7th September to 1st December 1931), Shafi acted as Deputy Leader of the Muslim delegation participating in the Conference. In this capacity, he worked hard to promote the Muslim cause. He argued for separate electorates and a federal form of government, with provincial autonomy, with considerable success.

The Muslim delegation discussed the agenda for every meeting and planned their responses and speeches in their private meetings before expressing themselves on the Muslim issue in various committees constituted for the purpose, such as the Federal Structure Committee, Minorities Committee or any other body of the Round Table Conference. Shafi worked in close concert with Jinnah. Such an understanding and coordination between the two Muslim leaders had not been witnessed before. In fact, it surprised both Hindus and the British. As Lord Sankey, the President of the Conference noted: "I had heard that the Muslims were born administrators but I have seen with my own eyes in the way that the Muslim delegation has worked as a team in Conference". (Shahnawaz:1971, p. 108). Shafi along with Jinnah tried his best to secure Muslim rights and interests in the Round Table Conference in London in 1930 and 1931, in tandem. He went on to challenge the Congress, the Mahasabha, and indeed the British to secure Muslim rights and interests. (Ibid: pp. 136-137).

Shafi could not attend the third and final Round Table Conference in 1932. Soon after the Second Conference, he was appointed, once again, as a Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council. But, then, unfortunately, he did not live long enough to serve the Muslims of India as such. He died in January 1932, leaving the Indian Muslims in general and Muslims of the Punjab in particular, still confronted with the uncertain future in the fast changing political situation of India.

■ Conclusion

It can be concluded and safely argued that Shafi was one of the most important leaders of the Muslim community in a very difficult phase of its history. He helped the Muslim identify, articulate and secure their demands and interests. He helped them found their own separate political organization, the AIML, to promote their interests. He never deviated from separate Muslim representation in all the elective bodies' a focal point around which the Muslim politics revolved and obviously, it provided basis for the Lahore resolution 1940 and ultimately separate Muslim state, Pakistan.

■ References

- Abid, S. Qalb-i. (1992) *Muslim Politics in the Punjab, 1921–1947*. Lahore: Vanguard.
- Afzal, Rafique. (1969). *Malik Barkat Ali: His Life and Writings*. Lahore: Research Society of Pakistan, University of the Punjab.
- Aziz, K. K. ed. (1972). *The All-India Muslim Conference: Documentary Record, 1928–1935*. Karachi: National Publishing House Ltd., 1972.
- Bahadar, Lal. (1979). *The Muslim League: Its History, Activities and Achievements*. Lahore: Book Traders, 1979.
- Batalvi, Ashiq Hussain. (1961). *Iqbal ke Akhri Das Sal*. Karachi: Iqbal Academy Pakistan.
- Parsad, Bimal (2000). *Pathway to India's Partition: A Nation within a Nation, 1877–1937*, Vol. II. Delhi: Manohar.
- Charag, Muhammad Ali. (1997). *Akabreen Tehrik-i-Pakistan*. Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications.
- Civil and Military Gazette*, 5 December, 1907.
- Civil and Military Gazette*, 30 March, 1927.
- Civil and Military Gazette*, 26 July, 1927.
- Gopal, Ram. (1976). *Indian Muslims: A Political History*. Lahore: Book Traders.
- Hamid, Abdul. (1963). Efforts of the Consolidation of the Muslim Position in The Board of Editors (eds). *A History of the Freedom Movement*, Vol. III, 1906–1936, Part II. Karachi: Pakistan Historical Society.

Hardy, Peter. (1972). *The Muslims of British India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hayat, Sikandar. (1998). *Aspects of the Pakistan Movement*. Islamabad: National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research.

Hussain, Azim. (1946). *Fazl-i-Hussain*. Bombay: Longmans.

Inqilab, 31 March, 1929.

Khan, Shafique Ali. (1985). *Two Nation Theory: As a Concept, Strategy and Ideology*. Karachi: Royal Book Company.

Malik, Ikram Ali Malik. (1970). "Punjab Provincial Muslim League, 1907–1917", *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan*, Vol. VII, No. 3. Lahore: University of the Punjab, July 1970.

Mitra, N. H. (1927), *Indian Quarterly Register*, January-June.

Mitra, N. H. (1928). *Indian Quarterly Register*, July-December.

Mitra, N. H. (1929). *Indian Quarterly Register*, January-June.

Mujahid, Sharif-al, ed. (1990). *Muslim League Documents, 1900–1908*, Vol. I. Karachi: Quaid-i-Azam Academy.

Mujahid, Sharif al, ed. (1990). *Muslim League Documents, 1900–1947*, Vol. 1, 1900–1908. Karachi: Quaid-i-Azam Academy.

Mujahid, Sharif al-Mujahid, (1981). *Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah: Studies in Interpretation*. Karachi: Quaid-i-Azam Academy.

Page, David. (1987). *Prelude to Partition: The Indian Muslims and the Imperial System of Control, 1920–1932*. Karachi: Oxford University Press.

Paisa Akhbar, 11, 25, 27, 28 October 1909.

Paisa Akhbar, 12 November 1928.

Pirzada, Syed Sharifuddin, ed. (1969). *Foundations of Pakistan: All India Muslim League Documents, 1906–1947*, Vol. I, 1906–1924. Karachi: National Publishing House Ltd. 1969.

Puri, Nini. (1946). *Political Elite and Society in the Punjab*. Delhi: Viqas Publishing House.

Rakkar, J. S. (1985). *Muslim politics in the Punjab* (Delhi: Deep and Deep Publications, 1985).

Salamat, Zarina. (1997). *The Punjab in 1920's: A case Study of Muslims*. Karachi: Royal Book Company.

Shafi, Mian Sir Mohammad. (1930). *Some Important Indian Problems*. Lahore: The Model Electric Press.

Shafi, Mohammad, ed. (1978). *The Aligarh Movement: Basic Documents 1864–1898*, Vol. III. Meerut: Meenakashi Prakshan.

Shah, Syed Akmal Hussain. (2003). *Sir Mohammad Shafi and The All-India Muslim League, 1906–1932*. Islamabad: Quaid-i-Azam University.

Shahnawaz, Jahan Ara. (1971). *Father and Daughter*. Lahore: Nigarshat.

Sherwani, Latif Ahmad, ed. (1987). *Pakistan in the Making: Documents and Readings*. Karachi: Quaid-i-Azam Academy.

The Muslim Outlook, 2 January 1928.

Wolpert, Stanley. (1993). *Jinnah of Pakistan*. Karachi: Oxford University Press.

Zaidi, A.M. (n.d.) *Evolution of Muslim Political Thought: Parting of the Ways*, Vol. III, 1926–1928. Delhi: S. Chand and Company.