**Quaid I Azam as a parliamentarian**

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Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah’s, the founder of Pakistan, birth anniversary is being celebrated once again on December 25, 2020 by the ever-grateful nation. As a public leader, despite all the odds against him, he had performed the political miracle of the 20th century by founding an independent country on the world map out of nowhere.

Mr Jinnah was attracted to politics when he was still in London studying law. He often attended the British Parliament and attentively watched from gallery the ways, manners, gestures and even the dress of prominent members. In fact, his reader’s tickets of the British Museum are still preserved in the British metropolis.

Quite significantly, he read all the speeches of important parliamentarians at the British Museum and this had formed the background of his career as well. He leaned towards liberalism and was not a narrow-minded sectarian or an intolerant politician. Instead, he always stood for liberal policies.

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Mr Jinnah started his parliamentary career with his election to the Imperial Legislative Council in 1909. He remained its member until March 28, 1919, but resigned in protest against what is known as the Rowlatt Act. He believed it to be a new shackle on the freedom of the people. However, despite his protests, the act was passed because the government members were in majority—ultimately leading to his resignation.

The several qualities of Quaid-i-Azam as a parliamentarian are often enumerated as his strategy, keen insight, abled advocacy, clear representation, reasoning power, balanced judgement and undaunted criticism. He was very often witty and sarcastic which distinguished him as a parliamentarian. In view of these qualities, the Quaid is generally described as an individual who was born to be a parliamentarian and his self-confidence, sincerity, honesty, outspokenness and frankness coupled with his ability and acumen made him proficient in his career.

The Quaid-i-Azam, as the Governor General, was the head of the executive and his presidency would have taken the traditions to the pre-1919 days. He would have presided over the meetings of the Assembly when it met as a constitution making body but Maulvi Tamizuddin Khan presided when it met as a Legislature and this was a tribute to the political genius of the Quaid-i-Azam –a title given to him by the Assembly.

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In 1945, crucial elections were held in the sub-continent through which the League won 100 percent of the seats in the Central Assembly and about 70 to 90 percent in the Provincial Assemblies. This had strengthened Quaid-i-Azam’s hands and paved the way for Pakistan.

After the partition, the Assembly had the twin capacity of being the Constituent Assembly as well as the National Assembly. The Quaid-i-Azam was elected as its President, besides being the Governor General. It was in this Assembly that he gave his address on August 11, 1947, and had laid down the guidelines for the future. In this historic speech, he had indicated that he wanted to see honesty, liberalism, a clean life and a noble society in Pakistan. It is sad, as well as dangerous, that we have forgotten the direction that was prescribed by the founder of Pakistan. However, at the same time, it must also be admitted that it was no other forum but the National Parliament at which the guidelines for the future were laid by the Quaid-i-Azam.

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Mr Jinnah distinguished himself as a brilliant and astute parliamentarian. In many parliamentary battles, he was the hero of the day. During the first decade of the Legislative Assembly, he had crossed swords with many powerful debaters and invariably came out with flying colours. His parliamentary speeches show his masterly grasp of the subject under discussion and incisive reasoning, the appeal of which is irresistible. In the legislature, he had shone as the epitome of parliamentary decorum, grand manner and elegant style. For such leadership, he seemed to be cut out from the beginning. He was always quick in his perception of legal squabbles and most legislative intricacies were ingrained in his blood.

The Quaid-i-Azam was a distinguished personality; very neat and clean. In the home, parliament and on public platforms, he used to wear three-piece suits and black or white sherwanis. Even in his old age, his behaviour and deportment distinguished him. These were the great qualities he possessed when he took the floor in the Parliament. This just goes to show that men like the Quaid-i-Azam are rare.