We have already stated that Gandhi was aware of the complexities added to the communal problem by the aspirations and programmes of the elite in both the communities. It was, therefore, essential for him to carry them with him in his search for its solution. It has already been noted that on his return to India in January 1915, he made contacts with those Muslim leaders who commanded influence in their community irrespective of their religious orientations, social outlook and political affiliations. He did not care to examine their past conduct before reposing his trust in them, whether they were ready to align themselves with him over the question of Hindu-Muslim unity. He tried to keep them with him in all the political movements launched under his leadership and relied on their support in pursuit of his efforts. How far did he succeed in his mission will be examined in this chapter.
Mohammed Ali (1878-1931) a founder member of All-India Muslim League was, according to J. Coatman, "one of the ablest and most picturesque of all the Muslim leaders of India." He founded 'Comrade', an English weekly, in 1911 and an Urdu daily 'Hamdard' which enabled him to establish himself as a leader of the Young Party, a position which was strengthened by the Cawnpore Mosque agitation and his bid to control Aligarh and Muslim movement. He was interned along with his brother at Chhindwara, where he remained from December 1915 to 1919 on account of his Pan-Islamic writings. He developed contacts with Gandhi through correspondence during this period. In a letter dated 20 February 1918, while asking Gandhi to seek the permission of the Government to meet him, he laid emphasis on the "unity of purpose" between Hindus and Muslims. However, he admitted that there was a growing class among Muslims who were 'apprehensive' of Swaraj and who preferred the supremacy of Englishmen to that of Hindus and therefore the programme of Hindu-Muslim unity did not appeal to them. It was in their eyes a "dwindling cause". Consequently, he suggested that in place of making futile attempts at the unity between two communities by making appeal to their

emotions, efforts should be made to unite them on
the basis of a programme that commanded their trust.
He wrote "I very humbly think that nothing but a bold
scraping of what is a more or less distrusted programme,
(i.e. Hindu-Muslim unity) and a fresh start with
clearly defined rights and privileges of all alone
can tide us over the present storm of distrust and
anger." ²

In fact the burden of Mohammed Ali's argument
was that unity between Hindus and Muslims could be
achieved, by ensuring to each community their just
rights and privileges. It was Islam and the interests
of his own community that had prior claims over the
Muslim leader and his anxiety to seek Gandhi's alliance
and friendship was mostly actuated by such feelings.
Only a few years before his friendship with Gandhi,
he wrote in his paper, 'Comrade': "For the sake of
the ultimate good of the country itself, even apart
from the catholic mission of a religion of brotherhood
and peace, they cannot reconcile themselves to that
supreme act of self-renunciation." ³ For him the demands
of his religion sometimes transcended the norms of
compromise, which he admitted to be the essence of
politics. Thus he wrote to Gandhi on 28 May 1919," ...

² Letter from Mohammed Ali to Gandhi dated 20 February 1918,
Mohammed Ali Papers, J.M.I.
³ Comrade, 19 August 1911.
but religious and moral issues are not accommodating and if you will re-examine the matter with your usual care and deliberation you will find that certain limits had been rigidly laid down for us by religion which we dare not overstep". So his religious outlook was not in accord with that of Gandhi whose view of religion transcended Hinduism and bound him to the truth that underlies all religions.

However, Gandhi's identification with the cause of Khilafat carried the Muslim leader closer to Gandhi. During the days of Non-co-operation he toured India with Gandhi delivering speeches in favour of Hindu-Muslim unity.

He endorsed Gandhi's programme of Boycott and Swadeshi and said without any reservation that the unity between the two communities would usher in a glorious era in the country. Thus in a speech at Bulandshahar on 12 April 1921, he told his audience that as soon as the two communities were united it would become impossible for any power on earth "to withstand this manifestation of God's benevolence."

5. Supra. Chapter II, p. 46.
6. Home (Pol.) Dept., Govt. of India, File No. 11/1921.
His association with Gandhi raised his position in the Indian National Congress. He presided over Coconada session of the Congress in 1923 which affirmed the Non-co-operation resolutions adopted at Calcutta, Nagpur, Ahmedabad, Gaya and Delhi and appealed to the nation to carry out the programme of constructive work as adopted at Bardoli. It was reported that Gandhi sent him message from the prison through Devdas Gandhi to the effect that he (Gandhi) was deeply touched by Mohammed Ali's loyalty to him.

During the communal riots that disturbed Gandhi after his release, Mohammed Ali also exercised his mind to know the causes of communal disturbances. In a letter to Gandhi dated 21 July 1924, he attributed the disturbances "to the misguided spirit of Sangathan movement, and the superfluous boastings of the 'Shuddhi' leaders", to which, he added "the activity of the fanatical section of the Tabligh leaders." In the next letter dated 27 August 1924, he expressed his complete dissatisfaction with the so-called Defence Associations which he wanted to be scrapped. While

8. Ibid.
submitting report of his efforts towards restoring communal peace at Amritsar, he lamented over the narrow vision and fanatical feeling of some Hindu leaders who would use "every little thing to rouse up communal feeling" in order to raise themselves into prominence.  

He actively participated in the proceedings of Unity Conference which was convened following Gandhi's historical fast in 1924. He expressed his satisfaction at the resolutions on conversion and re-conversion, cow and music questions passed at the Congress session of 1927 which he hoped would inaugurate a new era in which "we give security to each other only to be of good behaviour and overcome the need of seeking security from an alien Government."  

But the All-Parties Conference of 1928 marked a watershed in his relations with the Hindu leadership in the Congress. In one of the meetings he bitterly criticised them. In his anger, according to an eyewitness, his speech was like the "burst of a crater, emitting lava, smoke and dust, full of hard hits, insinuations and threats." He left the Congress and henceforth joined hands with those Muslim leaders who

were critical of Gandhi and Congress leadership. He was reported to have made derogatory utterances against Gandhi that "he would prefer to be a forsaken Muslim rather than a Hindu Mahatma,"\textsuperscript{13} or "the worst Muslim sinner criminal was better than the Mahatma."\textsuperscript{14} He criticised Nehru Report which, according to him, was only meant "to perpetuate slavery and Hindu domination."\textsuperscript{15} At the First Round Table Conference too, he acted only as a Muslim leader though his ill-health and failing eye-sight did not allow him to play any significant role there. It appears that during that period he was more concerned about his maintenance allowance than any problem of the country.\textsuperscript{16} He died in London in January 1931 while the Round Table Conference was going on.

His political career after his breach with the Congress shows that he was more anxious to retain his hold over his community than to maintain any consistency with his earlier utterances and political commitments. This, he thought, he could do only by identifying himself completely with his own community. In this respect, he had to compete with all those Muslim leaders whose claim to leadership was based only on the pursuit of the

\textsuperscript{13} Gokal Chand Narang, \textit{Op\textsuperscript{a}City}, p.9.
\textsuperscript{14} Moin Shakir, \textit{Khilafat to Pakistan} (New Delhi: Kalamkar Prakashan, 1	extsuperscript{st}70), p.XV.
exclusive interest of their community. It is this situation which must have been partly responsible in hardening his attitude towards Gandhi and the Congress. For instance, while in London in connection with Round Table Conference, he regularly received letters from Muslim elite and Muslim associations to the effect that he must not surrender over the principle of separate electorates. 17

His conduct after his break with Gandhi is bound to cast doubt about his bonafide interest in the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity and it appears that an "Alliance with the Hindus for him was a "Marriage de convenenance" out of which Muslims must get the best deal they could." 18

Shaukat Ali (1873-1938), a graduate of Aligarh University and private secretary of Aga Khan in 1910, involved, himself with Mohammed Ali in the publication of the 'Comrade' and 'Hamdard' in 1913. He was also interned with his brother from May 1915 to December 1919 at Chhindwara. He came in contact with Gandhi during his internment and supported Gandhi's programme of Hindu-Muslim unity and Non-co-operation. He toured the country with Gandhi tirelessly and spoke at various

meetings. On 29 November 1920, while speaking from 'Swaraj Office' Allahabad, he said, "Brothers, the success of India lies on this that both the Hindus and the Mohammedans turn into so near brothers as two sons of one mother." On 13 May 1921, he advised his audience to stick to the following condition for success: "You must strictly abide by the sacred promise you have made. The promise is that in spite of the efforts on the part of the Government to cause a gulf between the two communities, the Hindus and the Muslims should be so bound with the tie of love and affection as a brother loves his own brother .... I ask the Hindus as well as the Mohammedans to contract an everlasting friendship with one another. Your intention must be to live as brothers in spite of the obstacles that may come in your way." Again, addressing members of both the communities he affirmed that their friendship must be strong enough to withstand any sporadic offence by any member of the other community. He reminded the people that "... this Government full of Satanism has no weapon to stop the progress of Swaraj in India but the policy of setting the Hindus against the Mohammedans."

19. Home (Pol.) Dept., Govt. of India, File No. 11/1921. 20. Ibid.
During the days of Khilafat movement Gandhi along with Shaukat Ali, visited Aligarh University. According to the Intelligence Report, he succeeded in stirring up a large number of students "backed up by a continuous stream of Maulvis and other Mohammedan agitators from outside." The climax of this unprecedented fraternization was reached when Gandhi endorsed Shaukat Ali's views that Mohammedans should seek redress of the wrongs done to them by their Hindu brethren through Gandhi while Hindus should appeal to Shaukat Ali whenever any wrong was done to them by Mohammedans. "And finally I would repeat the advice", said Gandhi, "that Maulana Shaukat Ali has been giving times without number both to the Mussalmans and Hindus. When a Mohammedan feels irritated and angry with the Hindu neighbours and when he cannot restrain himself and feels that he must inflict condign punishment on his Hindu brethren, then he must go to Mahatma Gandhi and cut off his head". Reciprocating the sentiment, he advised the Hindus that if they "felt irritated against the Mussalman neighbours and wanted to pick a quarrel with them, they should not lay their hands upon the Mussalman neighbours but they should go to Shaukat Ali himself; although he is strong and burly,

he makes that definite promise that even a Hindu child may take his head off from his shoulders."\(^{22}\)

Thus during Non-co-operation movement he did his best to co-operate with Gandhi. He was secretary of the Central Khilafat Committee till his internment with his brother in September 1921. He was president of the All-India Khilafat Conference at Coconada in 1923. However, as already noted, they developed differences over their investigations into the causes of the Kohat riots.\(^{23}\) The proceedings of the All-Parties Conference of 1928 multiplied their differences. It appears that piqued at Motilal's contemptuous attitude towards him, he decided to pursue the exclusive interest of his community in order to consolidate his position among Muslims. Thus in a letter to Gandhi dated 25 November 1928, he wrote "People do not realise what painful results could be produced by such acts .... United work has almost become impossible and I have decided to devote all my time for making up the deficiencies of Muslims."\(^{24}\) Similarly, in a private letter to Ansari he complained against Motilal and his friends for making efforts to enlist support for his Report through questionable means. He wrote to him that "bogus Khilafat committees which

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never existed and never functioned were set up against our movement, so that Motilal Nehru and his Report may get fake support from Muslim Community. Your Punjab friends abused it in the press, and in the public and came inside only to create mischief and abuse us and other workers." Seething with rage at the indignities hurled at him by some Congress leaders, he added, "Hindus do not want our friendship and God willing, they will never get that.... I have borne and will in future, also bear many an indignity and insult to my own person but where the great Khilafat movement is concerned, I ... have a right to defend it and we will do so with our lives." He blamed the Congress for having throttled chances for Hindu Muslim friendship by becoming simply an adjunct to Hindu Mahasabha.

Though he had developed differences with Gandhi after the Kohat Riots, he was not rash, like his brother to call him (Gandhi) 'worse than a Muslim sinner'. In a letter to Gandhi dated 1 November 1929 he said "I do care what you may say or think about me" but he was pained for being neglected by him (Gandhi).

26. Ibid.
27. Ibid.
Gandhi tried to pacify him in his letter dated November 1929 that his judgement was hasty and could be wrong and so he might have to revise his views and decision on re-examining the whole situation.²⁹

However, in spite of his differences with the Congress leaders he was not entirely unresponsive to their efforts towards some kind of rapprochement between the two communities. In 1932, after the declaration of Communal Award, when Dr. Syed Mahmud approached Shaukat Ali to make a fresh attempt at Hindu-Muslim unity, he found him quite willing for a "permanent honourable agreement."³⁰ So at the Allahabad Unity Conference he (Shaukat Ali) was ready to concede joint electorates provided the Muslim interests were adequately safeguarded. But all these efforts failed because of a timely clever move made by the Government.³¹

Similarly, Abdul Bari (1878-1926) who was regarded by Ali Brothers as their Pir, or religious prefect, took part in Separate Electorates agitation of 1909 and Cawnpore Mosque case of 1913, developed friendly relations with Gandhi during 1918-19 and pressed the latter to start Satyagrah over the Khilafat issue. During the early

³⁰. Jayakar Papers, File No.355, S.No.3, Correspondence Hindu-Muslim Negotiations, N.A.I.
³¹. Supra. Chapter VI, p.185.
period of Non-co-operation, he was reported to have saved thousands of cows from butchery in Bombay.\(^{32}\) He and his followers made great efforts in enlisting support among the Muslims for Non-co-operation movement till the special session of the Congress at Calcutta. However, his association with Gandhi as well as with Non-co-operation movement did not last long on account of the increasing influence of Azad in the Congress, the entry of the followers of the Deoband school into the political movement and the subsequent efforts by the Government to win him over to their side. Thus in a letter to Abdulla Khan he wrote in 1922, "I write to assure you that my policy of non-violence or violence is governed by religious command. The hostile attitude adopted by the British Cabinet towards Islam caused stir in the Muslim world and the Indian Mussalmans also, in their disappointment and fears (For Islam) became opposed to Government from whom they hoped for help and support, apparently became inimical to Islam.... I opposed the Government simply because of their actions. To-day I am grateful to them by reason of their sympathy and am about to issue a proclamation in support of this. The aim and object of

\(^{32}\) Supra. Chapter III, p. 80.
us-Mussalman—is not political revolution but defence of Islam and maintenance of Khilafat. And now that Lord Reading is actively supporting our aim he is our sympathetic friend and patron. You can assure him and his government that so long as Mohammedans continue to live they will always be grateful to him and to Mr. Montagu. Now that the Government of India has stood up in the defence of Islam they are entitled to be regarded as ours and we as theirs and that we, considering their advantage as our advantage, should help them in every possible manner."  

This letter clearly shows that he was driven towards Gandhi simply because of his intense involvement in the cause of Khilafat. However, he maintained that his differences with Gandhi followed his realisation about the ineffectiveness of Gandhi's method of Non-violent Non-co-operation. Thus in March 1922 after the arrest of Gandhi a number of leaders gathered at Ajmer to participate in the Jamait-ul-Tulba, the Provincial Political Conference and the Khilafat, a resolution was passed to the effect that Gandhi had not retracted because of weakness but his actions were directed to God."  

33. Home (Pol.) Dept., Govt. of India, File No. 501/1922.  
34. Ibid.
But Abdul Bari struck the discordant note. It was reported that he lost control over his tongue. "His speech was violent, illogical, disconnected and vague." The impression conveyed to the audience was that he was advocating immediate violence, as non-violent methods had clearly proved a failure. In a press statement which was published in Amrit Bazar Patrika on 11 March 1922 he said, "I had agreed with Gandhi that until I become hopeless of the success of the Non-violent Non-co-operation movement I would not do anything against it whether openly or secretly."

Another important Muslim leader who joined the Khilafat movement but opposed Gandhi on several occasions in carrying out his programme was Moulana Hasrat Mohani (1872-1951). He was a graduate of Aligarh University. He was a politician and journalist by occupation. He founded an Urdu Weekly in 1903 which was published intermittently until 1930's. He was also an important agitator in Cawnpore Mosque affair. During Khilafat movement he associated himself increasingly with the Ulemas. This 'mad mullah' as Ali Brothers used to call him introduced a resolution on Non-co-operation movement on 23 November 1919 at the Khilafat Conference.

35. Home (Pol.) Sept., Govt. of India, File No. 501/1922. 36. Ibid.
at Delhi. He was president of the Khilafat Workers Conference held at Delhi in April 1920 and of All-India Muslim League at Ahmedabad in December 1921. He demanded complete independence for India at the All-India Khilafat Conference and the Congress session at Ahmedabad but he developed differences with Gandhi to which he gave expression at the Congress session at Ahmedabad. As reported by the Intelligence, he charged Gandhi with showing undue consideration to the interests of Hindus while Muslims were bearing the brunt of the Government wrath because of the Khilafat and Non-co-operation movements. He was reported to have said:

"Whenever the question of any right arises, you say that Hindu population of India is 28 crores and Mohammedans only 7 crores and so you are entitled to all privileges in proportion of 28 to 7 but for being shoe-beaten, assualted and killed and for going to jail the Mussalmans are 95, the Hindus only 5 in every hundred." He even put the blame on Hindus for all the atrocities they suffered at the hands of the Moplahs as, according to him, the Moplahs attacked Hindus in order to teach them a lesson for having connived with the Government to exterminate the former. He openly told Gandhi that their objective of Khilafat

37. Home (Pol.) Dept., Govt. of India, File No. 489/1922.
could not be reconciled to the ideal of Swaraj and consequently after abusing Gandhi he led his followers out of the 'Pandal' of the Congress. Henceforth, he opposed the programme of Non-co-operation and even favoured the dropping of Non-co-operation altogether, which surprised some of his Muslim contemporaries who were not involved in the Khilafat or Non-cooperation movement.

Nevertheless, Gandhi's efforts to involve Muslim leadership in the national movement through his identification with their religious cause and to seek their help in promoting communal harmony did not fail entirely. Some of his Muslim allies of the Khilafat days did not part company with him after the disappearance of the Khilafat issue and he continued relying on them for the success of his programmes. Among them were Hakim Ajmal Khan, Dr. M. A. Ansari and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.

Hakim Ajmal Khan (1863-1928) a founder member of All-India Muslim League in 1906, chairman of the Reception Committee of the All-India Muslim League, Delhi in 1910 and Vice-President to League in 1911 met in 1917 Gandhi who changed his course of life. He

38. Home (Pol.) Dept., Govt. of India, File No. 489/1922.
was the first Muslim to hand back his title of Hazik-u-mulk to the Government in 1920 in accordance with the programme of Non-co-operation. He was appointed chairman of the Reception Committee of the Delhi session of the Indian National Congress in 1918 and he presided over the session of All-India Khilafat Conference at Amritsar in 1919 and of Indian National Congress at Ahmedabad in December 1921 in which he did much to curb the extremists — a role which he was to continue throughout 1922.

It appears from an Intelligence Report that Ajmal Khan and Dr. Ansari were determined to maintain unity between the Khilafat Committee and the Indian National Congress after the suspension of Non-co-operation movement even at the risk of sacrificing the cause of Khilafat. It was reported that "Seth Chotani, Dr. Mahmud, Zahur Ahmed and Moazzam Ali came to Ahmedabad with the proposal that 'the Central Khilafat Committee should immediately send individual workers to the Provincial Khilafat Committees to arrange the simultaneous passing of a resolution from all Muslim platforms in India expressing gratitude to Lord Reading and Mr. Montagu.... Dr. Ansari opposed the motion most bitterly. He said that it would be inconsistent on the part of India to show any gratitude to Mr. Montagu after his speech in the House of Commons..."
about the British being determined people who accepted, the challenge etc. etc. But Chotani did not agree with Dr. Ansari. He said it was a question of religion and Islam and we should not stand on our dignity when our action will help the religious cause. Mr. Montagu has suffered to strengthen our cause and we should not allow this opportunity to pass out of our hands." At this Hakim Ajmal Khan and Dr. Ansari pressed that "Indian and Khilafat cause should go hand in hand," for "had it not been for united India the Government would have done nothing for the Mussalmans." "Gandhiji," "they added, "has sacrificed himself for the Khilafat. He is now going to jail for articles which he wrote for Khilafat. Their obligations to Hindus were so great that it would be a sin to do anything for Khilafat which might injure their cause."40 However, when Chottani insisted that political considerations could be kept aside for religious necessities and benefits, Ajmal Khan got displeased with him and Ansari threatened Chottani that Ajmal Khan would resign from Khilafat Committee if it would take any action independent of the Congress policy.41 Similarly, when Moulana Hasrat Mohani in a speech on 12 March 1922 used rough language against Hindus Hakim Ajmal Khan warned him

40. Home (Pol.) Dept., Govt. of India, File No. 501/1922.
41. Ibid.
that a recital of that kind of language would injure the cause of unity between the two communities. Thus he tried to check any tendency among his co-religionists that could impair the relations between Hindus and Muslims. In reply to Gandhi's appeal to him made in a letter written from jail, the Muslim leader assured Gandhi that he would sacrifice his life for latter's principles. It is because of this approach that he commanded the respect of both Hindus and Muslims. But, unfortunately, he had to retire from politics because of his ill-health.

Similarly, Dr. M. A. Ansari (1880-1936) who played an important part in arriving at the Lucknow Pact of 1916 and defended the cause of Khilafat was President of the Annual session of Muslim League at Delhi in 1918. He also held high position in the Congress and was a member of its Working Committee almost all his life. He was its General Secretary for several years and its President at Madras session in 1927. He was in complete accord with Gandhi on the issue of Hindu-Muslim unity. According to him "real and lasting unity was impossible unless Hindus and Mussalmans decided to adjust their differences in a spirit liberal and yet absolutely frank and in a just manner." He suggested a formula in 1923 that offered weightage to small minorities and provided the settlement of the questions.

42. Home (Pol.) Dept., Govt. of India, File No. 489/1922.
43. Letter from Hakim Ajmal Khan to Gandhi dated 17 March 1922, P.S.No.9994, G.S.S.
of cow-killing and music before mosque through Arbitration Boards. He wanted its ratification from Congress but according to Subhas Chandra Bose no heed was paid to it by the Congress in the Coconada session on the ground that it was "too favourable to Muslims." 

However, he continued making efforts towards Hindu-Muslim unity. In a letter to Secretary Khilafat Committee, Bombay, he expressed his determination to do all "to fight the demon of communalism which was devastating the country and was breaking asunder strong ties formed between Hindus and Muslims after centuries of intimate associations and common suffering and sacrifices." Accordingly, he decided to sever his connections with it arguing that "as an Indian owing allegiance first to the Motherland I feel I must sever my connections with all communal and sectional organisations." 

Gandhi reposed full confidence in him. In a letter to Sarojini Naidu dated 25 June 1927 he wrote that there was no other man than Dr. Ansari who could "pilot a Hindu-Muslim pact through the Congress." Consequently, he recommended his name for presidency of Congress for its session at Madras 1927 as "his selection will command universal acceptance." "Hindus", he added "will render him loyal obedience and the

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46. S.C. Bose, op. cit., p.133.
47. Letter from M.A. Ansari to Secretary, Khilafat Committee, Bombay dated 16 July 1926, Ansari Papers.
fact of the Congress being predominantly Hindu will not -cannot-be disputed by a Mussalman being in the Chair." During All-Parties Conference of 1928 he frequently sought Gandhi's help in order to arrive at a unanimous decision. He also championed the Working Committee formula of 13 July 1931 which laid down that representation of a community should be in accordance with the proportion of its population. He tried to prevent a division in the Congress over the question of Communal Award by making its staunch, Hindu members aware that any strong position taken up by the Congress would aggravate the situation. In a letter to M.S.Aney dated 14 April 1934 he wrote, "The question of the Communal Award appears to be calculated to create some complications on account of the fact that it should be made a major issue, other think that to tackle it is to invite trouble; for not only is it likely to set the Harijans at war, but it will also create complications to Swarajist Muslim candidates who may have to contest against reactionary rivals in separate consituencies." Similarly, he made efforts to soften the opposition of eminent Muslim leaders to the Congress. Thus in 1929 he appealed to Shaukat Ali to come to terms with the Congress for the sake of

49. Supra. Chapter VI, p.164.
50. Letter from Dr.Ansari to M.S.Aney dated 14 April 1934, File No.3, M.S.Aney Papers, N.M.M.L.
maintaining harmonious relations between the two major communities of India. Likewise he pressed on Jinnah in a letter dated 30 December 1934 to keep a conciliatory mood with Congress on the ground that his return to the Assembly at a very critical juncture in the history of constitutional changes, and his "usual patriotic outlook and political foresight would prove a great asset to the opposition." Jinnah responded to this letter favourably.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (1888-1958) received his early education on traditional lines. He started an Urdu Weekly on 13 July 1912 for creating awakening in his community. He was radical in his political and religious ideals. From 1916 to 1920 he was interned in Ranchi. After his release he played an important role in the Khilafat movement. He presided over the session of the All-India Khilafat Committee at Calcutta in 1920. He held an eminent position in the Congress. He was elected president of the special session of Indian National Congress held at Delhi in 1923 and was president of the Unity Conference of 1924. In 1928 he presided over Nationalist Muslim Conference. Throughout his life he was a staunch nationalist Muslim. Though a deeply religious man, he never made politics

51. Letter from Dr. M. A. Ansari to Shaukat Ali dated July 1929, Ansari Papers, J.M.I.
52. Letter from Dr. M. A. Ansari to M. A. Jinnah dated 30 December 1934, Ibid.
53. Letter from M. A. Jinnah to Dr. Ansari dated 3 January 1935, Ibid.
subservient to religion. The Khilafat agitation brought him in touch with Gandhi whom he met for the first time on 18 January 1920 in Delhi. He fully endorsed Gandhi's programme of Non-co-operation which he recommended to the Khilafat Conference at Calcutta in February 1920 of which he was the president. According to Diwan Chaman Lall "Azad exercised a great deal of influence over Gandhi over the matter of Khilafat."

To quote Mahadev, Gandhi's secretary, Azad was "a tower of strength to Gandhi ... more than any Muslim leader ... though he was the youngest ...." It was he who Ali persuaded Ali Brothers to follow Gandhi's programme of Non-co-operation.

Azad's liberal religious outlook attracted Gandhi as a result of which they developed greater intimacy. It is true that Khilafat was a religious question, but both Gandhi and Azad were aware of its political value as it could be an effective instrument in bringing the two communities closer. Unlike several other Muslim leaders his association with Gandhi was not limited to the Khilafat issue only. Consequently, he did not lose confidence in his ideals after the failure of the Khilafat issue. At a special session of Congress held on 15 September 1923 under his presidency he impressed upon both the communities to stop

Shuddhi and Tabligh as they generated an atmosphere of jealousy and revenge which was inimical to friendly relations between them. Admitting that India being inhabited by people of different religious persuasions and prejudices, disturbances now and then were quite possible but the remedy, according to him, "lay in not giving them a sectarian colour but to blame the guilty and sympathise with the wronged party." This was a sound counsel, though neither Hindus nor Muslims cared to follow it. Azad was one of a few Muslim leaders through whom Gandhi and the Congress could seek the support of Muslims though the extent of his effectiveness in carrying his own community with him varied from time to time. His interpretation of Islam as favourable to Hindu-Muslim unity had greater appeal for the elite because of his scholarship than of an ordinary Muslim leader. Consequently, he alone could say at the Unity Conference of 1924 that "beef was not necessary at ceremonial occasions." According to Mahadev Desai, without Azad the 2nd and 3rd resolutions of the Unity Conference of 1924 dealing with the cow and music might not have been passed.

Nevertheless, there was another class of Muslim leaders who, like the British Government, viewed the success of Gandhi's programmes and political movements as a danger to their political aspirations and position in the country. To them Gandhi was a leader of a political party and consequently, according to them, his success would raise its stature so high that it would overshadow all other political groups and parties. This, according to them, posed a great danger to Muslims since the party that Gandhi led was mostly dominated by Hindus.

Most prominent in this category were Fazal-i-Husain (1877-1936) and M.A. Jinnah. The former was a graduate of Government College, Lahore. He was well versed in British History, literature and legal system that shaped his mental make-up. He was the first joint secretary of All-India Muslim League — a position which he continued to hold till 1920. He also acquired an eminent position in the Punjab Provincial Congress during the pre-Non-co-operation period. But Gandhi's Non-co-operation movement brought a profound change in him. He left Congress in 1920 as the programme of Non-co-operation could not fit into his mental make-up, training and political outlook. But his break with the League and the Congress earned
for him the favour of the Government. He was appointed Minister of Education and Local Bodies in the Punjab on the implementation of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms. He tried to regain the influence in his own community, which he had partially lost on account of his opposition to Khilafat movement, by strengthening the position of Muslims in the province by offering them larger representation in the Local Bodies and Public Services. During the election of 1923, he formed the Punjab National Unionist party which, in spite of its non-communal pretensions could not cast off its communal colour on account of the dominant position of the Muslims in it. He strongly favoured separate electorates which, according to him, was conducive to national unity as it ensured protection to minorities. He argued that "The experience of Municipal and District Board elections has unmistakably shown that voting invariably takes place on communal lines, and the obvious conclusion of this experience is that the Hindus, who incidentally are educationally and economically better off than Muslims and have a powerful press to support them, will sweep the election ... joint electorates can only be fair to the minorities when people are sufficiently politically minded to rise above communal considerations."  

59. Azim Husain, op. cit., p. 182.  
60. Ibid.
To substantiate his point he cited the examples of Bengal and the Punjab where Muslims numerical majority was simply nominal as it was a minority in every other sense, e.g., in the voting register, in Public Services, and in Local Self-Government. Giving the instance of the Punjab where the Muslim population was 55% its voting strength was only 42% of the total electorate which meant that if the voting took place strictly on communal lines they were bound to be in a minority. Consequently, he not only opposed joint electorates tooth and nail but extended the principle of separate electorates even to the election of the Local Bodies, recruitment to the public services and admission to educational and technical institutions. This policy generated fears among Hindus of the province that it aimed at dislodging them from their superior positions in the different spheres of life. Consequently, they raised a great hue and cry against it. But the Muslims, including some Congressmen, supported this policy. Even Kitchlew justified his policy from the Khilafat platform. According to him "Mian Fazal-i-Husain was only trying to do justice to the Muslim community." In support of it he said that "leaders like C.R. Dass, Pandit Motilal, Mr. Chintamani and lately Mr. Gandhi had

61. Azim Husain, op. cit., p. 182.
examined Mian's policy and were satisfied that it was just. 62 Similarly, the Punjab Khilafat Conference that included a number of Mohammedan Congress leaders passed a resolution on 10 December 1924, urging Mahatma Gandhi to persuade Hindus to accept communal representation on a proportionate basis in the councils, local bodies and services. 63

Gandhi tried to win over Fazal-i-Husain to create a climate in the province favourable to communal harmony. He met him during his visit to Lahore in December 1924 and expressed his appreciation for the "reasonable and plausible conversation that he had with the Mian." 64

Later on, Gandhi admitted that the Punjab Minister could make out a case in justification of his policies which, the latter argued, were not directed against Hindus but aimed at raising the economic condition of the rural masses, majority of whom were incidentally Muslims in the Punjab. However, Gandhi noticed that underlying the controversy between the Punjab Minister and Hindu leadership there was going on a great struggle of power between the leaderships of the two communities. Consequently, Gandhi's efforts

64. C.W., Vol.XXVI, p.54.
did not yield any positive result. Fazal-i-Husain continued pursuing his policies vigorously since he had the support of the bureaucracy as well as of the majority in his own community. He was successful even in winning over a section of Hindu leadership. So it became difficult for the Congress or any other group to dislodge him from power. The Muslim leader was aware of the fact that the success of the movement launched under the leadership of Gandhi would result in raising the stature of the Congress in the country which also stood as a rival to his Nationalist Unionist Party in the Punjab for capturing power. Consequently, he put all his weight on the side of the bureaucracy in weakening any movement started by the Congress. According to a Chronicler, Fazal-i-Husain made every possible manoeuvre to frustrate any agreement between Muslim members and Gandhi at the Round Table Conference. He, himself, stated that when the Nawab of Bhopal had brought together representatives of the Muslim Conference and the Nationalist Muslims and they had reached an agreement, he (Fazal-i-Husain) got it disowned by the Muslim Conference Executive. He next persuaded Willingdon to disown Irwin's commitment allowing Gandhi to take Ansari and Ali Imam, or at best Ansari with him as Congress delegates. 65 He told a 'secret' to a correspondent that it was he who sent a

message to the Secretary of State through Viceroy Lord Irwin in December 1930, that "it was unfair to the Muslims, who had kept away from Gandhi's Civil Disobedience movement to make them accept what the Nehru Report had offered them." Referring to the First Round Table Conference, he made the following observations, in his diary on 3 December 1930, "News from Round Table Conference, indicate that Labour Government made attempts to make Muslims agree to some sort of joint electorates .... I had to take strong action and this situation has just been saved. We must keep our present weightage in six provinces and centre and separate electorates ... let Hindus non-co-operate and let us build up sufficient strength during the next ten years."  

Being a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council and entrusted with the task of fighting the Civil Disobedience movement he was in a position to exert pressure both on the Government and the Muslim political elite to prevent the Congress from swallowing up all other political parties through its success in arriving at agreement with major Muslim groups over the communal issue. So his efforts in this direction continued during the Second Round Table Conference.

It is reported that when Gandhi had arrived at a provisional agreement with some Muslim delegates in the first week of October 1931, it was disowned by other members "under the influence of Aga Khan and of remote control by Fazal-i-Husain."\textsuperscript{68}

Similarly, he used all his influence and resources to get such Muslim delegates nominated to Round Table Conference as were opposed to any compromise with Gandhi. Commenting on Fazal-i-Husain, F.W. Wilson, ex-editor of the "Pioneer" observed, "... this much at least has to be recorded as an established fact, that this Muslim leader always proved himself most hostile not only to the idea of entering into a pact and understanding with Gandhi and the Congress, but even to the general policy, which necessitated intimate conversations with the moderate leaders."\textsuperscript{69}

Mohammed Ali Jinnah (1875-1948) was called to the Bar in 1896. During his stay in England he did extensive studies in the British Museum and closely watched the British Parliamentary system. He attended the Congress session of 1906 in Calcutta. During his early political career, he was deeply influenced by S.N. Banerjea and Gopal Krishna Gokhale and was even

\textsuperscript{68} Durga Das, \textit{op.cit.}, p.161.
\textsuperscript{69} Quoted in Abdul Majid Khan, \textit{Communalism in India} (Lahore: Paramount Publications, 1944), p.36.
known as "The ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity". In order to carry Muslims close to the Congress, he helped the League to draft a new constitution which virtually embodied the Congress ideals of self-government by constitutional means and promotion of national unity and co-operation with other communities which was later accepted by the League in March 1913. He pursued this policy even at the risk of earning displeasure of a section of his community. It was reported that when he tried to hold the session of the League at Bombay simultaneously with that of the Congress, "Sunni Mohammedans of Bombay refused to consider him as a Mohammedan..." and his demand for holding a session of the League at Bombay was rejected on the ground "that Hindu Political movement was likely to do more harm than good to Mohammedan interests." But he remained undeterred and guided the League on constitutional lines along the path of Congress till 1919.

However, the adoption by the Congress of Gandhi's programme of Non-violent Non-co-operation at its special session at Calcutta and its ratification at Nagpur

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73. Ibid, May 1915, Nos. 855-858.
threw him out of the political current of the time as he could not adjust himself to the new political programme on account of his mental make-up and training. "He felt," according to J.L. Nehru, "completely out of his element in the Khadi-clad crowd demanding speeches in Hindustani." At that time he was opposed to the blending of religion with politics on the ground that it had infused religious frenzy into politics and had thereby caused political confusion. He was, therefore, opposed to the Khilafat movement. As reported by Kanji Dwarkadas, he along with Umar Sobhani warned Gandhi "not to encourage the religious fanaticism of the Muslim priests and their equally illiterate, ignorant, and superstitious Muslim followers." 75

However, he felt that his was a voice in wilderness and there was hardly anyone in the Congress to listen to him. According to his biographer Hector Bolitho, at the Nagpur session he was the only prominent man who opposed Gandhi's programme of Non-co-operation. Addressing Gandhi, he said, "Your way is the wrong way; mine is the right way." 76 Diwan Chaman Lal recalls, "... he sat down with a hurt look at his face..." 77

He left the Congress in 1920. Out of sheer disgust with Indian politics he withdrew from it for some time,

77. Ibid.
but re-entered it in the later half of the twenties as a champion of the interests and aspirations of Muslims. He was mainly responsible for formulating the "Delhi Offer" in 1927 which later on formed the basis of his "Fourteen Points". The principle underlying all these offers was

78. Jinnah repudiated the Nehru Constitution and laid down his famous Fourteen Points on 28 March 1929, embodying the minimum demands which ran as follows:

1. The form of the future constitution should be federal with the residuary powers vested in the Provinces.

2. Uniform measure of autonomy shall be granted to all provinces.

3. All Legislatures in the country and other elected bodies shall be constituted on the definite principle of adequate and effective representation of minorities in every Province without reducing the majority in any province to a minority or even equality.

4. In the Central Legislature, Mussalman representation shall not be less than one-third.

5. Representation of communal groups shall continue to be by means of separate electorates as at present; provided that it shall be open to any community at any time, to abandon its separate electorates in favour of joint electorates.

6. Any territorial redistribution that might at any time be necessary shall not in any way affect the Muslim majority in the Punjab, Bengal and the North-West Frontier Province.

7. Full religious liberty, i.e. liberty of belief, worship and observance, propaganda, association and education shall be guaranteed to all communities.

8. No bill or resolution or any part thereof shall be passed in any Legislature or any elected body if three-fourths of the members of any community in that particular body oppose such a bill, resolution or part thereof on the ground that it would be injurious to the interests of that community or in the alternative, such other method is advised as may be found feasible and practicable to deal with such cases.

9. Sind should be separated from the Bombay Presidency.

(Contd. on next page)
that the system of separate electorates could be got rid of, as demanded by the Congress, "through a system of give and take". For, in his view, both joint as well as separate electorates have certain advantages and disadvantages. "Therefore, the real issue," he added "is how to give a real sense of confidence and security to the minorities." 79

In a letter to Mohammed Ali dated 30 November 1927 he showed his disinclination towards any "individual or isolated action" for, according to him, "it is essential that a policy of common and concerted action should be adopted if we are to meet with any success." 80

10. Reforms should be introduced in North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan on the same footing as in other Provinces.

11. Provision should be made in the constitution giving Muslims an adequate share, along with other Indians, in all the Services of the State in local self-governing bodies having due regard to the requirements of efficiency.

12. The Constitution should embody adequate safeguards for the protection of Muslim culture and for the protection and promotion of Muslim education, language and religion, personal laws and Muslim Charitable institutions, and for their due share in the grants-in-aid given by the State and by local self-governing bodies.

13. No Cabinet, either Central or Provincial should be formed without there being a proportion of at least one-third Muslim ministers.

14. No change shall be made in the Constitution by the Central Legislature except with the concurrence of the States constituting the Indian Federation.

File No. 356, S.No. 19, Chronological Correspondence, Javakar Papers.

79 Hector Bolitho, op.cit., p.85.
Jinnah left for England in April 1928 but only to return in October 1928. In his absence several meetings of leaders of different communities had taken place that led to the Nehru Report which we have already referred to. Jinnah's absence in these meetings and silence over all these developments kept Motilal Nehru doubtful and uncomfortable regarding the fate of the Report since he apprehended that Jinnah, in spite of his sound political judgement, might reject the proposals under the influence of reactionary Muslim leadership. So he expressed his misgivings in a letter to Gandhi on 22 October 1928, "There is only one man about whom I am very anxious and that is Jinnah. He has not yet returned from England and has not expressed himself one way or the other. But for one weakness, he is thoroughly sound. He is always afraid of losing his leadership and avoids taking risks in this matter. This weakness often drives him to support the most reactionary proposals. In reality he has no following at all and his so-called followers are men who fully understand his weakness and bend him to their own will.

"After he has played into their hands it pays them to boom him as a great leader of the Mussalmans. He cannot, of course, defend his attitude when talking

freely with me. His one explanation is, my dear fellow, I have to take these fools with me."82

In fact, Jannah never had complete hold over the League during twenties or early thirties of this century. Whenever he made a move in arriving at any communal or political settlement one group or the other in the League did not follow him. Thus the Shafi group in the League did not like his participation in the All-Parties Conference in December 1928. This group met on 31 December 1928 in Delhi and held a meeting named All-Parties Muslim Conference which was presided over by Aga Khan. This Conference made it clear that Jinnah was not representing the whole community in All-Parties Convention at Calcutta.

Such moves again compelled him to withdraw from Muslim politics. He decided to settle down in England in 1931. But he returned to Indian political platform in 1933 in response to the appeal of his admirers and took over the leadership of the Muslim League.

It is obvious that Jinnah could not join hands with Gandhi partly because of his peculiar mental make-up and partly because of the pressure of the political pattern that had been shaped by communal demands and fears. His demands and political demeanour were justified

82. Letter from Motilal Nehru to Gandhi dated 2 October 1928, R.S. No. 14842, G.S.S.
only in the context of communal politics. "His whole manner of approach," observes Chaman Lall, "was like a person who wanted to protect his own particular community and in that sense he could be considered to be a man of a separate nation than a nationalist of great importance so far as Indian politics was concerned." It was this fact, he adds, that Hindu or Congress leadership ignored as a result of which they did not consider to be a man of a separate nation than a nationalist of great importance so far as Indian politics was concerned. It was this fact, he adds, that Hindu or Congress leadership ignored as a result of which they did not consider the offer that Jinnah made for joint electorates important enough at that time. "Possibly", he continues, "we were too Hindu-minded at that time in our leadership." The problem according to him, "would have been solved much earlier if Hindus had yielded on that particular issue and accepted joint electorates." However, one fact that Dewan Chaman Lall ignores is that Congress had a large majority of Hindus who also had certain fears from Muslims and were reluctant to believe that any settlement would be treated as final by Muslim leadership even if it was arrived at after yielding substantially to Muslim demands. This consideration was more important in the context of the position

83. Chaman Lall, op.cit., p.28.
84. Ibid., p.32.
85. Ibid., p.33,
of Jinnah that mostly rested on his ability to carry with him even such sections of Muslim leadership that thrived on their opposition to the Congress. As already noted, Jinnah himself confessed before Motilal Nehru that one of his major compulsions was that he had to "Carry those fools with him."86 He had, therefore, to compromise his own political judgement and principles to meet the demands of such sectional interests. Moreover, after leaving the Congress Jinnah became conscious of the fact that he could play a vital role in Indian politics as an opponent of the Congress since the British would welcome him as a potential counterpoise to the growing strength of the Congress and all the forces opposing Congress in his own community would rally round him. His experience at the Congress session in 1920 had revealed to him that he could not hold an eminent position in the Congress which he deserved because of his intellectual and political equipment. Probably he nursed secretly a raw deal that he had at the hands of the Congress leaders including Gandhi and was in search of an opportunity to give it back. It was because of certain built-in prejudices against the Congress leadership and his ambition to play a vital role in

Indian politics, that it became difficult for them to know Jinnah's mind and understand the nature of his demands. Even Sikander Hyat Khan, the Premier of the Punjab, who had been closely associated with the League since Sikander-Jinnah Pact in the last quarter of 1937, admitted before Nehru in January 1938 that the former was also one of those who did not know what Jinnah really wanted. Though this incident is beyond the scope of this study, it does reveal the personality of the Muslim leader who opposed all Gandhi's moves to arrive at a settlement between Hindu and Muslim elite about their political demands.

Gandhi was confronted with different kinds of leadership among the Mohammedans and it was impossible for them to carry all of them with him in spite of his best efforts. Being driven by his assumption that a common political programme and offer of unconditional support to the Muslims in need would ultimately remove Muslim prejudice against a joint action with the Hindus, he did not care even to examine the mental make-up and predilection of Muslim leaders before imposing confidence in them. Though he was able to create a small body of Muslim leadership through whom he tried to direct Muslim political aspirations towards nationalist channels, he

could not build up a sufficiently strong group of Muslim elite who had control over the Muslim masses and thereby could disarm the moves of the separatist Muslim leadership. Not that the former were second-rate leaders or were insincere to what they professed. But they had to face greater odds in removing Muslim fears of Hindu domination. For, on the one hand they had to contend with separatist Muslim leadership who quite often had the support of the bureaucracy and on the other hand they had to persuade the Hindu leadership both in the Congress and outside to help them in weaning the Muslim masses away from the hold of separatist leadership through generous approach to Muslim aspirations and demands. For this they leaned heavily on Gandhi and some of his supporters. But the task was not so easy because of the fears and opposition of Hindu leadership that looked at Muslim demands from a different angle. This will be evident from the study of Hindu leadership made in the next chapter.