

## A GREAT STALWART OF ALIGARH MOVEMENT NAWAB MOHSIN-UL-MULK

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### Abstract

*Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk, one of the great stalwart of the Aligarh Movement, has rendered valuable services for the educational uplift of the Muslims in the subcontinent. He was a strong adherent of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan in pursuing educational philosophy. He tried his level best to stand Aligarh on strong footings. In political domain, he played a pivotal role in supporting the Muslim cause in the subcontinent. The paper tends to highlight the personality of Mohsin-ul-Mulk in a holistic way.*

### Key words

Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, Aligarh Movement, Mohammadan Educational Conference, Congress.

The sad demise of the War of Independence of 1857 had landed the Muslims in extremely hapless and miserable conditions. Their resurgence as a nation required a miracle. It was the Aligarh Movement of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan which came like a ray of hope and injected a new spirit in the dormant body of the Muslim nation. The historic achievements of Aligarh Movement were achieved under the earnest and diligent services rendered by his closely associated colleagues. They were tireless workers and loyal lieutenants of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and always stood by him in all circumstances. Their devotion and loyalty to the cause of Aligarh was a great source of strength for the sage of Aligarh. "After Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's death, the great movement might have been failed if his loyal lieutenants Moshin-ul-Mulk and Viqar-ul-Mulk had not come to its rescue".<sup>1</sup>

The name of Moshin-ul-Mulk is most prominent for keeping the mission of Aligarh alive and making it dynamic after the death of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. His real name was Mehdi Ali. He was born in Etawah on December 9, 1837 in a family which was not well educated. He received his early education on the

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traditional pattern of the Muslims; was sent to a Madrassah where he was taught Arabic, Persian and Theology. He was very promising and hard working from the outset. After completing his earlier education he started his careers as an ordinary employee in the Collectorate with a salary of only five rupees per month in the beginning, which was customary in these days. After proving his calibre and worth one could be entitled to a job with a salary of ten rupees per month. Industrious by nature, he would sit in his office after closing time, and would be busy learning the procedural rules of business of the Collectorate. One night when the Collector was on his routine round, he saw light in one of his rooms. Prompted by the curiosity to know, the collector went inside and found Mehdi Ali busy learning the code of business. The Collector was very much pleased and raised him to a job with still higher salary of rupees ten per month. It is interesting to note that recalling his early days in service Moshin-ul-Mulk told Khan Bashir-ud-Din in later life, "The real pleasure that I got out of life on Rs. 10/- per month, I have never experienced again with higher salaries".<sup>2</sup> G. Allana appreciating this trend in his character says, "This admission in itself is an indication of his humble nature, a life dedicated to hard work and entirely devoid of ostentatiousness- a life of simple living and high thinking".<sup>3</sup> His rise in service was meteoric, after that.

Allen Hume, the District Collector, was very much impressed by young, intelligent and industrious Mehdi Ali and he raised him to the post of Sarishtadar. Mehdi Ali justified his selection to this post and the Collector Allen Hume, spoke very high of him to other English officers, too. At the age of twenty four, he got another promotion when he was appointed as Tehsildar, a post which was very rare for an Indian Government servant of such young age. Young Mehdi Ali, once again proved himself quite fit for the job. Young, energetic and enthusiastic Mehdi Ali was still ambitious to rise to the post an Indian could ever aspire for. He wished to try his luck in the Provincial Civil Service examination for which he had devoted all his spare time to make proper preparations. He took the examination in 1867 and topped the list of successful candidates which was a clear evidence of his ability and calibre. Thereafter he was appointed as Deputy Collector with a handsome salary of Rs.340/- per month. As Deputy Collector, he proved a great success. The Collector of the Mirzapur was so much satisfied by his performance that at the end of the year he recorded in his service book, "I am in a position to say with confidence that there is no other Government servant as intelligent, as honest as Medhi Ali".<sup>4</sup>

Two years later there was a great trial for Mehdi Ali when his district was hit by severe famine. But he again proved equal to the occasion and rendered yeomen services in providing relief to the famine-stricken people. For this great and timely relief work he was praised by English superior officers. Hume wrote, "He has successfully accomplished the most difficult task assigned to him".<sup>5</sup>

Medhi Ali who did a remarkable job to redress difficulties of the people during the famine caught the eye of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan who was immensely impressed by him and recommended his name to Nawab Sir Salar Jang of Hyderabad Decan who offered him a lucrative job. Medhi Ali resigned his post as Deputy Collector and proceeded to Hyderabad to take up his new assignment with the Government of the Nizam.

Medhi Ali served the State of Hyderabad for over two decades and he earned great appreciation for the good work he carried out with devotion and enthusiasm to the betterment of the State. He held many important and high offices during this period and was recipient of many honours. The Nizam of Hyderabad conferred on him the title of Munir Nawaz Jang and Nawab Mohsin-ud-Daula Mohsin-ul-Mulk. And it is by this name that he is linked with Aligarh and the great Aligarh movement, and as the successor of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. He gave a dynamic and progressive outlook to the administrative machinery of the State.

He visited England in 1888 in connection with the State business and utilised this opportunity in studying the impact of modern education on the progress of the west. Moreover, he also realised that if the Indian Muslims were to have an honourable and dignified place in the future setup of the country they must take to modern education. During this visit he met with Gladstone and other ministers. He also wrote an article, while in England, in the Nineteenth Century through which he refuted the allegations of the Sir Lepel Henry Griffin that Muslims could never be loyal to the British Government because of their religion. Through his article he justified that the Muslims had absolutely no justification for Jihad until Government interfered in their religious affairs. In support of this argument he referred to the services of the Nizam to the British Indian Government during the war of 1857. His article went a long way to dispel doubts of the English about loyalty of the Muslims. "After Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, it was one of the most effective attempts at creating an atmosphere of reconciliation between the Muslims and the British Government".<sup>6</sup> This article was widely appreciated and consequently Sir Lepel Henry Griffin had to apologise for his certain remarks.

He resigned from the Hyderabad State service for some reasons in 1893. He was very popular with the masses in Hyderabad about which Maulvi Abdul Haq writes, "When Mohsin-ul-Mulk left Hyderabad thousands of the people came to say him farewell. They were virtually weeping over his departure".<sup>7</sup>

Mohsin-ul-Mulk's association and friendship with Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was quite long. Like the sage of Aligarh he also felt deeply concerned over the deplorable condition of Indian Muslims and their defective educational system. When Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was in England he analysed the Indian educational

system and suggested some improvement in it. He also despatched some material to the Mohsin-ul-Mulk for publication in India. "Sir Syed Ahmad Khan published a questionnaire about the causes of Muslim aversion to Government educational institutions, Mohsin-ul-Mulk's answer was considered the best amongst the thirty two articles which were received".<sup>8</sup> This indicates deep insight and concern of Mohsin-ul-Mulk into the national problems and Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's confidence in him.

Ever since, the death of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, the affairs of M.A.O. College were in critical condition, its financial position was declining rapidly. Its income could not meet the running expenditure of the College and the loans continued increasing. The office of the Secretary was daily visited by the creditors for the payment of their dues. Fraud committed by Hindu accountant on the College staff had shaken confidence of the donors. Fresh entry of the students began to stagnate and then to decline. From 1895 to 1898 the strength of the College students had decreased from 595 to 343. Sir Syed, could cope with this difficult situation. But Syed Mahmud, who succeeded to the office of the Secretary after the death of his father, was in a poor condition physically and mentally. He was unable to check decline of the College, which was heading towards the complete disaster. The Trustees, therefore, selected Mohsin-ul-Mulk as new Secretary of the College which he accepted though it was an up-hill task under the prevailing circumstances.

Mohsin-ul-Mulk's decision to settle permanently at Aligarh, after resigning the State service, was to serve the cause of Aligarh Movement. Though the task was enormous but its enormity could not deter him. It was a big challenge which he accepted with courage and confidence and stood still like a rock in a rough rude sea. He started his efforts to meet the stupendous challenge. He undertook long and irksome tours all over the country to spread the message of Aligarh and generate funds to overcome financial stringency of the College. But the big impediment in this regard was that before one could contribute to a cause he must be convinced about the genuineness of the cause. Therefore, Mohsin-ul-Mulk had to work hard in order to restore confidence of the donors in the genuineness of the cause. His efforts started succeeding which according to S.M. Ikram, "The measure of the Mohsin-ul-Mulk's success as Secretary may be judged from the fact, while there were 343 students in the college when Sir Syed died, the number had risen to 800 at the time of Mohsin-ul-Mulk's death nine years later. The half finished buildings were completed and new ones were taken in hand. The annual income of the College was doubled and a sum of nearly six lakhs of rupees were collected, in addition to raise it to the level of a university".<sup>9</sup> It was, indeed, his great success to put the college back on the track. S.M. Ikram says, "The causes of Mohsin-ul-Mulk's success are to be found in his tact, industry, shrewd common sense and dedication to his work".<sup>10</sup>

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's speeches and writings had inadvertently given rise to a bitter antagonism between the religious Ulema and what Aligarh stood for. The responsibility of this arduous task, to appease and win over this vocal and important segment of Muslim society in favour of Aligarh, fell on the shoulders of Mohsin-ul-Mulk. His sincere and unrelenting efforts bore fruit. Some leading Ulema were invited to Aligarh to see personally the good work that Aligarh College was doing. After their visit to the College the Ulema stood more than satisfied and thereafter they began to support Muhammadan Educational Conference in an appreciable manner. The tenacious and sincere efforts of Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk had so deep impact upon the Ulema that in the words of G. Allana, "Orthodoxy had been converted as the supporter of the Aligarh, and this considerably helped the cause of Aligarh movement."<sup>11</sup>

In order to give projection to the College and its activities, Mohsin-ul-Mulk's strategy was to invite foreign dignitaries to Aligarh. "The college not only invited the Prince of Wales-later King George V- but also the Amir of Afghanistan, who after testing the boys in the knowledge of the Quran and Islam, declared that those who criticised the College for indifference to Islam were all liars".<sup>12</sup>

Mohsin-ul-Mulk strongly believed that if Aligarh was to progress and develop into an educational centre of Muslim India with a central Muslim University, it must win good will and confidence of all Muslims. After the death of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, he realised that some of the leading political leaders' attitude was hostile towards Aligarh. In fact, it was the result of Sir Syed's bitter remarks about the Congress when during a speech at the annual session of Muhammadan Educational Conference he warned the Muslims to keep away from the Congress activities, which he said was not a friend of the Muslims. The annual session of the Congress that year was presided over by Justice Badruddin Taybji of Bombay. He interpreted Sir Syed's remarks as being not only hostile to the Congressite Muslims, but to him in particular. Naturally Taybji had no sympathy for all that Aligarh stood for and consequently from that day an acrimonious controversy started between Taybji and Sir Syed. It was extremely essential that such an important and powerful man like Taybji should be won over to the cause of Aligarh. So Mohsin-ul-Mulk met Taybji and after marathon parleys succeeded to win his support so completely that in 1903 Taybji actually presided over the annual session of Muhammad Educational Conference and since then he became an ardent supporter of the Aligarh Movement. Shortly before his death Taybji, in a statement, said, "There is no Musalman in India, certainly not in Bombay, who does not wish all prosperity and success to Aligarh".<sup>13</sup> In winning over the support of an immensely influential and powerful man, Badaruddin Taybji, to the cause of Aligarh was a colossal achievement of

Mohsin-ul-Mulk about which S.M. Ikram writes, “The real secret of his success lay in this disarming temperament, and sweet, winning personality”.<sup>14</sup>

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan had founded the Muhammadan Educational Conference in 1886 with the prime objective to popularise modern education amongst the Muslims. But he could not pay much attention to it as he remained over occupied with the College affairs and the Muhammadan Education Conference remained neglected, gradually losing its utility. After Sir Syed's death, Mohsin-ul-Mulk was elected as new Secretary of the Conference. He injected a new spirit in it and made it a dynamic force. He embarked on many tours, addressed public meetings to spread its message. As a result of it, people started realising its utility and significance.

During the life of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, activities of the Muhammadan Educational Conference were mainly confined within U.P. Its only one session was held outside this province. The credit of spreading the message of the Conference and introducing its activities, far and wide, in the country goes to the Mohsin-ul-Mulk. During the next ten years its various sessions were held in other provinces outside U.P. thus interest of the Muslims in the Conference outside U.P. was created by the efforts of Mohsin-ul-Mulk.

Another notable contribution of the Conference under the leadership of Mohsin-ul-Mulk was that it introduced and popularised the idea of establishing Islamia Schools on self-help basis. With it there started an hectic activity of fund collection and establishing Islamia schools in different parts of the country. “Such schools established by the Muslims themselves, lessened the Muslim aversion towards modern education and made them realise the necessity of educating their children”.<sup>15</sup>

The beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century once again saw the eruption of Urdu-Hindi controversy which had deep roots in the history of the subcontinent. It was a burning topic during the days of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. Urdu was the court language in the North-Western Provinces and Bihar since 1835. The Hindus opposed it and wanted to replace it with Hindi at any cost. This movement against Urdu had its origin in 1867 at Benares when some Hindu leaders demanded that “the Urdu language written in Persian script should be discontinued in Government courts and should be replaced by Hindi language written in Devanagiri script”.<sup>16</sup> This move of the Hindus exposed their designs against the Muslims. Altaf Hussain Hali, the well-known biographer of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, writes that it was the occasion, “When he (Sir Syed Ahmad Khan) felt that it was impossible for Hindus and Muslims to progress as single nation and for anyone to work for both of them simultaneously”.<sup>17</sup> Sir Syed remained busy, to counter it, for a long time.

Sir Anthony Patrick MacDonnell, a staunch supporter of the Hindus, who was well known for his anti-Muslim leanings, came as Lieutenant Governor of U.P. in 1895 where Hindus had already launched a movement against Urdu language. In March 1898 some influential Hindus presented a memorandum urging the Government to replace Urdu by Hindi as the court language. The Lieutenant Governor, through an ordinance on April 19, 1900, raised the status of Hindi as court language along with Urdu. The Muslims strongly resented this move. This event gave an impetus to Muslim political consciousness.

After the death of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan the responsibility of defending the cause of Urdu language fell upon the shoulders of his successor Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk. The Muslims were looking towards him for urging their point of view. The Nawab rose to the occasion and accepted the challenge courageously. He formed Urdu Defence Association and began to organize protest meetings. The first was held on 13 May 1900 at Aligarh which was chaired by Nawab of Chattari. This enraged the haughty Lt. Governor, Anthony MacDonnell, who wrote to Syed Mahmud strongly criticising the organization. Consequently the Nawab of Chattari had to resign from the Presidentship of Urdu Defence Association. Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk, however, held the ground firmly and continued holding the protest meetings one after another. Another was held at Lucknow on 8 March 1900 recording severely strong sentiments of the Muslims against the Government orders. This was enough for the Lt. Governor who took it as personal affront and rushed to Aligarh; called a meeting of the Trustees and conveyed his displeasure over what was going on and warned that if the public protests against the Government policy continued all the financial assistance to the College would be completely stopped. Moreover, his attitude towards Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk, Secretary of the College, was not worthy of a Governor about which G. Allana records, "The Governor had obviously stopped to adapting unfair and mean tactics. He refused to grant an interview to Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk, and said that he could communicate by a letter whatever he wanted to say. In the correspondence the Governor refused to address him by his recognised title and name, but went on addressing as Maulvi Mehdi Ali".<sup>18</sup>

Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk's opposition to the Government orders over Urdu-Hindi controversy was damaging the cause of Aligarh College quite a lot. He therefore, voluntarily decided that his personal prestige should not stand in the way of future of the College. So, he resigned from the Secretaryship of the College on 26<sup>th</sup> August and was now free to carry on his campaign in the defence of Urdu language. When the news of his resignation was made public, it created a great stir all over the country. The people earnestly realised that his resignation at this critical stage would lead the College in dire difficulties. All Muslim papers and associations looked upon the resignation as a calamity and demanded its withdrawal. The close friends of Sir Syed like Hali, Viqar-ul-Mulk, Sir

Muzammal Ullah Khan and his son Syed Mahmud exerted utmost pressure on Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk and requested him to withdraw his resignation in the interest of the College. The Nawab Sahib reconsidered his decision before the public pressure and withdrew his resignation with the condition that the Honorary Secretary was free in his personal capacity to take part in political controversies. He patiently waited for the departure of MacDonnell as Lt. Governor of U.P. And when that time came, he formed Anjuman-i-Taraqui-e-Urdu as a wing of the Muhammadan Educational Conference, for the development and preservation of Urdu language. He, very wisely, appointed Thomas Arnold as first Secretary of the Anjuman to protect it from any possible assault by any misguided Englishman.

The new Governor of U.P. was Sir James La Touches. He did not raise any objection but made it clear that the Government would not restrict anyone's freedom. Urdu was raised to its former position in offices and courts. Jamil-ud-Din Ahmad appreciating his efforts writes, "Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk, by tact and firmness, thus scored a significant victory from the point of view of the political interest of the Muslim nation, thus paving the way for its organisation as a political force which could not be ignored in any future dispensation".<sup>19</sup>

The dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century brought in its wake the growth of unrest amongst the Muslims. The Aligarh Educational Movement had started yielding fruit. M.A.O. College was producing regular flow of talented Muslim graduates. Now, the prejudice against modern education was not as strong as before. A new society was fastly emerging on the debris of the old one. There was a marked change in the thinking and attitude of the people. Since its formation, in 1885, the Indian National was organising the Hindus on its platform.

Revival of Maratha militant traditions under Tilk and his parochial activities had created hatred against the Muslims which went on mounting with the passage of time. The Government was following a policy of bestowing honours and distinctions on Hindus and relegating the Muslims to cold shadow of neglect. On the other hand the Hindus, from the Congress platform, were demanding democracy which meant their permanent domination over the Muslims. The Muslims did not expect justice and fair play from the Congress and considered their association with it suicidal.

As long as Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was alive, he kept the Muslims away from politics and tried to divert their energies to modern education. The Muslims did not feel the need of political organization as long as he was alive, because Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was a great political institution in himself. But his death had created a big vacuum which could only be bridged with the establishment of a political organization. The time had arrived as new political developments were swiftly emerging with the surging tide of Hindu nationalism which was



threatening the separate identity of the Muslims. All these factors compelled the Muslims to form political organization of their own.

The discussion leading to the formation of new political organization was initiated by Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk. In a letter to *The Pioneer* he wrote that Sir Syed did not mean a complete ban on political activity. He always presented Muslim point of view to the Government in the best possible manners. But after his death, an organization was essentially needed to convey the feelings of the Muslims to the Government. Viqar-ul-Mulk strongly supported his point of view and emphasised the dire need of forming a political organization. It was, therefore, decided to convene a meeting of the leading Muslims to finalize the matter.

The proposed meeting was held in 1901 at Lucknow. Viqar-ul-Mulk explained the deteriorating conditions of the Indian Muslims and the Government's aversion to ameliorate them. He proposed the formation of a political association to defend the rights of the Muslims and look after their needs; and made a hectic tour of different parts of the country in this connection but could not achieve substantial success.

The partition of Bengal, in 1905, exposed the Hindu designs which shook the Muslims out of their political slumber. The new province of Bengal consisted of Assam and North-Eastern districts of Bengal started functioning on 16 October. In the newly created province Muslim population was two-third. The Muslims were quite happy over the partition and they welcomed it. But the Hindus took it as permanent domination of Muslims over them and started agitation against the partition which was masterly organised and scientifically executed. Communal riots sparked off which made law and order situation worst. During this wholesale disorder the Muslims suffered a lot. The agitation against the partition came like a rude shock to Muslims. These events strengthened in them the realisation of organising themselves and forming a political organization of the Muslims. Moreover, these painful episodes convinced the Muslims that they would have to struggle extremely hard, in the days to come for their honourable survival.

The turning point in the phase of Muslim political movement came in summer 1906. In August 1906 the Viceroy, Lord Minto, had appointed a committee of the Executive Council to inquire into the working of Indian Council's Act 1892 and examine the possibility of further constitutional reforms. The committee expressed the opinion: "The Muslims had not been sufficiently represented on the existing Councils, that the elected members had not been really representative, and that the nomination had failed to secure the appointment of the Muslims of the class desired by the community".<sup>20</sup>

A liberal Government had assumed office in England and a common feeling was that it would introduce some constitutional reforms in India. One morning in 1906 the speech of John Morley, the Secretary of State of India, regarding constitutional reforms was published in the newspapers. Nawab Moshin-ul-Mulk who was looked upon as leader of the Muslims after Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, took the lead in the matter of protecting the Muslim's rights and interests, in the coming reforms. With this objective in the view he wrote letter to Archibold Principal of the M.A.O. College, Aligarh, who was holidaying at Simla, asking him to approach Col. Dunlop Smith, Private Secretary to the Viceroy, and tell him that a Deputation of Indian Muslims wishes to place their demands regarding their political rights and ask a reply.

In the mean time Nawab Moshin-ul-Mulk received message from the prominent Muslim leaders like Viqar-ul-Mulk, Khawaja Yousuf Shah and Sahibzada Aftab Ahmad Khan requesting him to take steps for the protection of Muslim interests under the forthcoming constitutional reforms. A meeting of the leading Muslim leaders was held to prepare final draft of the memorandum to be presented to the Viceroy. "A memorandum was drawn up demanding separate electorates for Muslims, and it was adopted in a meeting of the Muslim leaders held at Lucknow on 16<sup>th</sup> September, 1906, under the Chairmanship of Sir Abdur Rahim".<sup>21</sup> The meeting authorised Nawab Moshin-ul-Mulk to select members of the Deputation. He selected thirty five prominent Muslims from different parts of the country, and proposed the name of Agha Khan to lead the Deputation.

The Deputation was received by the Viceroy on October 1, 1906. The memorandum presented to the Viceroy contained Muslim grievances and their demands in proper and respectable way. "The most important demand of the Deputation, as is well known, was election of the Muslim representatives to legislative councils and municipalities through separate electoral colleges, but it also asked for the employment of a due proportion of Muslims in Government service and appointment of Muslims to High Courts and Chief Courts".<sup>22</sup> Commenting on these demands Jamil-ud-Din Ahmad writes; "Separate electorate, implicit in these proposals, was the best device the Muslim leaders could suggest for safeguarding of Muslim rights and preservation of political, social and cultural identity of the Muslims consistently with the system of representative institutions".<sup>23</sup>

The Viceroy gave a sympathetic reply. Paying a glowing tribute to the Aligarh College and its founders he said, "Aligarh has won its laurels. Its students have gone forth to fight the battle of life strong in the tenets of their own religion, strong in the precepts of loyalty and patriotism and now when there is much that is critical in the political future of India the inspiration of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and the teachings of Aligarh shine forth brilliantly in the pride of Mohammadan

history, to the loyalty, commonsense and sound reasoning so eloquently expressed in your address”.<sup>24</sup>

Touching on the specific point raised in the address the Viceroy, Lord Minto, observed. “The pith of your address, as I understand it, is a claim that, in any system of representation, whether it affects a Municipality, a District Board, or a Legislative Council, in which it is proposed to introduce or increase an electoral organisation, the Mohammadan community should be represented as community..... I can only say to you that Mohammadan community may be assured that their political rights and interests as a community will be safeguarded in any administrative reorganisation with which I am concerned, and you and the people of India may rely upon the British Raj to respect, as it has been its pride to do, the religious beliefs and the national traditions of the myriads composing the population of His Majesty’s Indian Empire”.<sup>25</sup> The Simla Deputation was the most successful in securing separate electorate for Muslims. About the commendable role of Nawab Moshin-ul-Mulk in this regard Jamil-ud-Din Ahmad writes: “The success of Deputation and the speed and thoroughness with which it was organised was a tribute to the political sagacity and sincerity of purpose of Nawab Moshin-ul-Mulk. For a man of his advanced age he displayed amazing energy and circumspection and at a crucial moment, gave a correct lead to the Muslims of India which had profound effect on their destiny in the subcontinent”.<sup>26</sup>

After the principle of separate electorate had been conceded a stage came in the evolution of Muslim politics when they felt they were in acute need of their own political organisation. This was already agitating the minds of great leaders like Sir Agha Khan, Nawab Moshin-ul-Mulk and Viqar-ul-Mulk. As a result of long correspondence between them, a meeting of the Muslim leaders was convened at Dacca on 30<sup>th</sup> December, 1906, on the eve of annual session of Muhammadan Educational Conference. The idea about the formation of a Muslim political organization was floated in the form of a resolution which was unanimously passed and the long awaited All-India Muslim League came into existence. Nawab Moshin-ul-Mulk and Viqar-ul-Mulk were asked to draft its constitution and Agha Khan was to be its permanent president. This is how Muslim League came into being which ultimately succeeded in having Pakistan established.

Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk had not been having a good health since 1888. During his visit to England he had his medical check-up and remained under treatment for some time. He did not have robust constitution; therefore, he was off and on having bouts of ill-health. He was chronic patient of diabetes which had made him quite weak. His physicians had advised him to give up his routine activities and have complete rest in order to give his heart a chance to recoup. But there was an instinct in his blood which compelled him constantly to continue his

activities, for the cause of his nation, without caring for his aliment and ill-health. In 1907, at the age of seventy, he told his friend Maulvi Waheed-ud-Din, “Maulana, on the face of it, I seem to be all right. But it seems as if something that was within me always, is now dead. My heart has sunk, and now I don’t feel interested in life as before”.<sup>27</sup> By the end of September 1907, he left for Simla in order to be closer to the Government, as a far reaching changes were being discussed in the constitution of India which could make future of Muslims. Although the high altitude of Simla was not suitable for his deteriorating health, but he was there to do his bit for the cause of the Indian Muslims to whom he had dedicated his life. He called on the Viceroy and discussed the case and the Muslim point of view with the Government. Thus, working hard at a stage of fastly falling health, he put his already strained heart under more and severe strain. In October, he was confined to the bed struggling for life until he breathed his last on 16 October 1907 at 6 p.m. He wished to be buried at Etawah in the ancestral burial ground of his family. But the grateful and admiring following that he left behind thought it more befitting and appropriate that he be laid to rest at Aligarh for which had devoted his life, rendered monumental services and made it a truly national institution. He suffered along with his friend Sir Syed Ahmad Khan: remained with him through thick and thin for the most of his life and did not like to depart from him even after his death. So, he was buried in Aligarh by the side of Sir Syed.

His death deprived the Indian Muslims of a great untiring and dedicated leader who had been strenuously struggling for the welfare of his nation till the last moment of his life. He assumed Secretaryship of the College at a time when it was on the way to fast decline and was about to succumb to colossal problems which appeared to be insurmountable. The college was like a patient in an oxygen tent. He set himself to the hard task of liberating the college from the clutches of gigantic problems. Lots of funds were generated to rid the College of its financial stringency. Public confidence in the College was restored and the number of students was tremendously increased; about seven lakh rupees were collected for the proposed Aligarh University. Thus, he succeeded to revive prestige of the College from the tottering stage to the heights of great glories and enviable prominence. Anticipating the future changes and coming events he organised Simla Deputation which succeeded in securing separate electorate for the Muslims on which their future struggle was based. Another feather which he added in his cap was founding of All-India Muslim League which was responsible for the creation of Pakistan. Nawab Moshin-ul-Mulk’s stupendously great achievements was that he saved the Aligarh Movement from being doomed; injected a new life in its tottering body and kept it going which ultimately changed destiny of the Muslims and map of India.

Maulana Altaf Hussain Hali had paid a befitting tribute to Nawab Moshin-ul-Mulk which he richly deserved:

“A friend of Muslims; the people’s benefactors  
Freedom’s battle he won, and fell a martyr.”

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