

## **Book Review**

### **Jinnah: India-Partition-Independence**

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Author: Jaswant Singh  
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The book under review *Jinnah: India-Partition-Independence* written by Jaswant Singh, ex Indian Foreign Minister of BJP Government, is a large size, hard cover that also contains over twenty seven pictures of Jinnah and maps of Punjab, Assam and Bengal as well. Jaswant Singh paid a heavy cost on writing such book that was not less than his expulsion from the basic membership of BJP. The book was later banned in Gujarat. Jaswant Singh, ex- Indian Army officer, hails from a Rajput family of Jodhpur, Indian State of Rajasthan. He is one of the few political leaders who served as a Finance Minister, Foreign Minister and Defense minister of India in different political regimes and prolific writers who have many renowned books on his credit. His earlier work include; *Defending India* (Feb 15, 1999), *District Diary* (2001), *Guru Ke Bete* (Punjabi) (2002), *Jiwni Baba Sangat Singh Ji* (Punjabi) (2002), *A Call to Honour: In Service of Emergent India* (2006), *Travels in Transoxiana* (2006), *Khankhana Nama (Hindi)* (2006), *Shoor Shoorma* (2007), *Till Memory Serves: Victoria Cross Winners Of India* (2007), *Conflict And Diplomacy East Pakistan Becomes Bangladesh* (2008), *Our Republic Post 6 December 1992: A Dialogue* ,2008. His judicious political views, civility, self-confidence, jingoism and liberal egalitarian personality earned him Outstanding Parliamentarian Award for the year 2001.

The book '*Jinnah, India, Independence*' is unique in its own kind which has been authored by one of the founding members of hard lining BJP that has never accepted the idea of partition over the last sixty three years. The author very boldly puts the culpability for division of India in 1947 on Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and the Indian National Congress rather than Muhammad Ali Jinnah. The book portrays the political life sketch of Jinnah from being the Indian nationalist and ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity, to the defender of the Muslim rights

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and lastly to a stubborn Ideologue of the ideology of Pakistan. The squabble followed by him, certainly, confirms Jinnah not only the Quaid-e-Azam of Pakistan but also of the entire South Asia. The author terms the vivisection of India as ‘wounding trauma’ because the creation of two states faced disgusting massacre on both sides. This bifurcation not only created two separate national ideologies but narratives of communal distrust and an enduring vendetta. The author’s contention based on his postcolonial assessment of Indian history is that the Indian Muslim scrupulous uniqueness and Muslim nationalism preceded the augment of Hindu nationalism. The main theme of the book revolves around answering the questions like:

- Why did the division of the India take place at all?
- And who was to blame? By whom fault?
- How and why did this alteration get consign?

Using established theories of nationalism-including mechanism of Kalhana, Ram Gopal Mishra, C.H. Philips, Herodotus, Ibn Khaldun and others, he investigated the literary, political, and sanctified texts shaped by the Pakistanis and Indian instigators. The author solicits where and when did Two Nations Theory originate and where does it escort the Indo-Pak Subcontinent. He believes that revitalizing of long-lasting serenity and harmony in South Asia is only possible when we first realize and value what made Muslims ‘abandon’ us in the first place.

### **Review**

Besides the preliminaries; list of illustration, appendices, endnotes and the index, the book has been divided into eleven chapters. The main inspiration of writing on Jinnah blinked in author’s mind during the Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajjee’s official Lahore visit on February 22, 1999. When the author along with the Indian Prime Minister was touring Minar-e-Pakistan, he thought that there is no biography of Jinnah written by any Indian Political figure. So in 2004 he started his momentous work and after a span of five years in 2009 he concluded this arduous task.

In chapter first, under the titled ‘India-Islam-Nationhood’ the author takes start from a multifaceted openings, briefly, scrupulously and with full arguments thrash out the Islam and its prologue in India. He describes Muslim’s rise and fall in India by making references from *The Causes of the Indian Revolt* and *Hayat-i-Javed* English and Urdu by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and Altaf Hussian Hali respectively. The text briefly analyses and underscores the consequence of the post revolt Muslim politics and the centrality of rise of Muslim exceptionalism and politics on the basis of Two Nation Theory till August 14, 1947.

The second chapter, captioned 'Jenabhai to Jinnah: the Journey' explores and illuminates Jinnah's early days, his schooling in India and his advanced education in England. In this chapter the author also momentarily discusses about influence of Dadabhai Naoroji, and Gopal Kirshna Gokhale on young nationalist Jinnah. Singh asserts that his earlier career as barrister and his entry into politics as an Indian Nationalist influence Jinnah as a fervent advocate of Hindu-Muslim unity. It was Jinnah who rejected the demand for separate electorates and the creation of a communal Muslim party and did not take part in the Khilafat movement. It was Jinnah's political outlook that motivated Sarojini Naidu to portray Mr. Jinnah as an '*Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim Unity*'. Until he joined the Muslim League in 1913, Jinnah was a dedicated nationalist Congressman guaranteed by his secular credentials. Due to dual membership of League and Congress, Jinnah served as the chief architect of Lucknow Pact-1916 -a comradeship between two parties. The author finds a mesmerizing coincident that of the two main actors (Jinnah and Gandhi) in India's freedom struggle and partition, one was from Kathiawar and the other also had his lineage in the same principality.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Chapter titled as 'The turbulent twenties' describes that, the more the efforts were made towards communal tranquility, and the greater became a surge in conflicts between Hindu and Muslims. The author while lime lighting the materialization of the Hindu Nationalism asserts that the Nationalists Movements like; Shudhi, Sangathan, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh etc had great role in the Indian national politics. When Jinnah walked out of the Congress, it was not a saunter towards Pakistan. Jaswant Singh says 'It could not be, for almost every Muslim was with Gandhi when Jinnah left the Congress.' In this portion the author also declares Jinnah efforts for the merger of Hindu-Muslim unity concession on the Delhi proposal which considered the Shafi League as a gaffe on Jinnah side.

In chapter four 'Sharpening focus narrowing options' author's main focus is on Gandhi's entry into the Indian politics and his political philosophy, that he (Gandhi) wrote, 'Should the British be thrown out of India? Can it be done, even if we wish to do so? To these two questions we can reply that we stand to lose by ending British canon and that, even if we wish for, India is not in a situation to end it. The Nehru report and its consequences, Jinnah's entrance into the second phase of his political career as the defender of the Muslim rights through constitutional safeguards. Besides, the author illustrates brief scrutiny of the different social groups, about the Round Tables Conferences and its outcomes held in London.

In chapter 5<sup>th</sup> under the titled 'A short decade-A long end game' the author discusses the political events happened in India and abort for a span of five years from 1935 to1940 including All India Muslim League, a details about 1937 provincial elections and their domino effect,

Muslim League Resolutions regarding Muslim representation. Besides, the author deeply debates on Jinnah's friendly stance towards the British cooperation in the Second World War. Jinnah's cooperation with the British won him a number of recognitions while the Congress Party leadership went to jail. The author also bickers and calls the Muslim League observance of the Day of Deliverance as a 'tyranny, oppression and injustice' by quoting *Hindustan time*. He also quoted Jinnah later in 1945 as 'there was going to be a deal between Mr. Gandhi and Lord Linlithgow. Providence helped us. The war which no body welcomes proved to be a blessing in disguise'. In this part the author lastly limelight's the Pakistan Resolution and affirms it Jinnah's 'carefully planned strategy' to gain control of Muslim politics and cornerstone of Pakistan. However, Jaswant Singh is still silent to answer; why Jinnah considered that Muslims would be better off in a sovereign Pakistan.

Chapter 6<sup>th</sup> under the caption 'Sunset of the empire-post-dated cheque on a collapsing bank' the author takes start from a momentous stretch that the germs of the separation of India having being flourish, incessantly, years after years, as much by us i.e. Hindus and Muslims as by the post-second World War emasculate the British. This part discusses in details the August 1940 Offer, Cripps Mission and the League and Congress stance during the 2<sup>nd</sup> world War, the politics of the Muslim majority provinces i.e. Punjab, Assam and Bengal, Sir Sikander Hayat, Sir Muhammad Saadullah and A.K. Fazal-ul-Haq respectively. The author briefly talks about the 'Fazal-ul-Haq resignation as a revolt against Jinnah, and the Gandhi's Quit India agitation that deliberately interrupted Britain's overall war effort. Singh calls Gandhi-Jinnah Talks-I, II, as a 'reconciliation, a last attempt to gather some grains from the dust of the destructive partition' and Azad termed it as 'divorce before marriage'. Holding of a plebiscite in the demarcated Muslim majority areas and their separation from the Hindu India were the main points on the agenda. Though the talks were failed but boosted up the image and moral of the Quaid-e-Azam. And lastly the author highlights the Liaqat-Desai Pact and calls it as an untimely delivery. Singh asserts that it is worth mentioning that the Congress Working Committee did not give its ticket to Desai to contest the election for the constitutional assembly for the secret deal, he made with Liaqat without the approval of the high command of the party. At the end of the chapter Jaswant Singh appears to be reluctant in accepting the reality of the division of India.

The chapter 7<sup>th</sup> 'A war of succession-Diverging paths' starts from the Wavell Viceroyalty era, and believes that careful partition done over a period of time would have with little loss of life. It was due to British obsession that there would be no riotous bloodshed - before and during the partition. The author discusses other topics as the Simla Conferences, the 1946 elections, Congress and League in UP, Cabinet Mission, Congress President elect's interview, Direct

Action Day and the Calcutta riots. The author asserts that in the Simla Conferences the parity issue proved to be the serious bone of contention between the Congress and the League. Jinnah for the first time in the history of his political career was compelled to resort to direct action while observing the Direct Action Day. The observance of Direct Action Day, spread like a chain-reaction, a rapidly transferring contagion from Calcutta to the rest of East Bengal’.

Chapter 8<sup>th</sup> titled ‘Stymied Negotiations?’ is the remaining part of the previous topic Cabinet Mission plan. The author quotes Wavell diary as

‘we must either adopt entirely the Congress point of view or Jinnah’s point of view but there was no half way house...I think he [Gandhi] had adopted Patel’s thesis that if we are firm the Muslim will not fight’

While analyzing Gandhi-Jinnah formula Singh argues that though Nehru and the Congress leadership had rejected the formula but it was in a sense ‘Gandhi’s last attempt to save India from a partition.’ And on the other side Jinnah countered the arguments of the Congress leaders, all account agree on his side, and made him an icon of the Magi’s match.

In chapter 9<sup>th</sup> ‘Mountbatten Viceroyalty: The end of the Raj’ the author briefly discusses the position with wiles; the situation which led the demand of Mountbatten induction as a Viceroy of India to conclude the transfer of powers. The author quotes Mountbatten as ‘I tried every trick I could play, I used every appeal I could imagine, to shake Jinnah resolve... nothing would. There were no arguments that could move him from his consuming determination to realize the dream of Pakistan’. The author assures then the sole spokesman Jinnah; a great ideologue of the ideology of Pakistan and nothing could move him from his chosen path. About Gandhi, the author asserts that Gandhi mistake was not in making the offer but in assuming that his chief lieutenants in the Congress, Nehru and Patel would stand by what he had said which they did not. In this portion the author discusses the topics under the titled the Radcliffe Commissions and Awards, the Congress and partition plan, the AICC meet of June 14-15, 1947, the Governor-General of Pakistan and August 15, 1947. Although in this portion he understand that the Jinnah as the sole spokesman cleverly but being an Indian the author appears, to not have prepared to accept with the reality of the partition of India and bring forth the proceedings only of Congress with different corroboration which present one side view of the partition’.

Chapter 10<sup>th</sup> carries the caption ‘Pakistan: Birth-Independence: The Qauid-e-Azam’s last journey’. Its first paragraph mentions Jinnah’s desire ‘burying the past’ when he arrived Karachi after the partition. Then, the author limelights the earlier setup of the government and various events related to Jinnah’s life by quoting different sources associated of him in that time. In last

para the author tries to put Jinnah and Gandhi on identical footings and acknowledges their efforts.

The last chapter 'In Retrospect' is the conclusion of the author. It concludes different aspects debated in his book e.g. Muslims-A separate Nation? Islam and the Nation Concept, Partition and afterthoughts in India, the partition that robbed us of peace, a fractured freedom and the end. He sums up the grand political journey of Jinnah from the Indian nationalist and ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity, through the defender of the Muslim rights through constitutional safeguards to a stubborn Ideologue of the ideology of Pakistan. According to author the vivisection of India as 'wounding trauma', dubbed the creation of Pakistan as 'disruptive and destructive path' and 'moth-eaten' because in his scrutiny, the creation of the two states faced disgusting massacre steadfast by both divided sides. This division not only created two separate national ideologies but narratives of communal distrust and an enduring blood feud. He believes that for the revisit of long-lasting serenity and harmony in South Asia there is no choice but to first realize and value, what made Muslims discard us in the first place.

### **Conclusion**

Indian nationalists in general and BJP in particular tint Mohammed Ali Jinnah as the villain of India's division in 1947. He's hated as the conspirator who created Pakistan, which has ever since been a putrid wound in India's nationhood. But Jaswant Singh, who hails from BJP, gives a dazzling explanation of the intrigues and faults that ensued behind the panorama. It is a well presented research work, showcasing Jinnah as a hard working, tranquil, unruffled and composed character, who never attacked Hindus or Hinduism as such. As a full-grown politician and strong supporter in nonviolent, legitimate and constitutional means, his antagonism to Congress was on the bases of principles and not personal motives. On a question to whether Jinnah was a great man, he said, 'Oh yes, self made man who resolutely worked towards achieving what he had set for himself'. While referring to the dilemma of the Indian Muslims today, he said, 'Look into the eyes of the Muslims that live in India and if you truly see through the pain in which they live in to [the] land which they belong; we treat them as aliens'.

Jaswant Singh preserves:

'...He (Jinnah) created something out of nothing and single-handedly stood against the might of the Congress and the British who didn't really like him...Gandhi himself called Jinnah a great Indian. Why don't we recognise that? Why don't we see (and try to recognize) why he called him that? I admire certain aspects of his personality; his

determination and the will to rise. He was a self-made man. Mahatma Gandhi was the son of a Diwan. All these (people) - Nehru and others - were born to wealth and position. Jinnah created for himself a position'.

The book can be placed amongst one of the best on Indian freedom movement that is a sparkling smash from conformist narration. Bundle of books have been written (and some of them have taken the same view) but Jaswant Singh's words carry credence. He has no hatchet to pulverize, to use a chestnut. He believes that real come back of the lasting peace in South Asia is only possible if the leaderships of both countries put the past in the past and evade circumstances that could probably lead to clash. 'Where there is a will there is a way'. If both countries determine to find a way forward and learn from past gaffe, there should be no reason that peace cannot be convinced to return. This task engages accepting the reality of partition, recognizing the ideology of Pakistan and existence of Hindus and Muslims as separate entities with distinct cultures and way of life. Forbearance, endurance and collaboration are the necessary components of peace. A new beginning is indispensable for friendship between India and Pakistan. Reciprocal respect and sympathetic understanding is vital for excellent neighbourly relations, synchronization and serenity in the region. We need to put the past in the past. But it necessitates a spirit of understanding to confess that the conception of Pakistan was the only just, laudable and realistic solution of the most multifaceted lawful problem of the subcontinent.