



Jinnah of Pakistan

Stanley Wolpert

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“Few individuals significantly alter the course of history. Fewer still modify the map of the world. Hardly anyone can be credited with creating a nation-state. Muhammad Ali Jinnah did all three.” Stanley Wolpert

These are the opening lines of the preface of Stanley Wolpert’s book, “Jinnah of Pakistan” and serves to entice you to read an extremely thorough, comprehensive and detailed study about one of the most pragmatic and charismatic leaders of South Asia, Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

Stanley Wolpert is an American academic who is considered to be one of the world's foremost authorities on the political history of modern South Asia. During a trip to Bombay in 1948, he became interested in the complexities of Indian culture, history and politics. Since 1962, he has published many fictional and non-fictional books on his favorite subject.

In the preface, Wolpert adds: “For more than a quarter century, I have been intrigued by the apparent paradox of Jinnah’s strange story which has to date never been told in all the fascinating complexity of its brilliant light and tragic darkness.”

“Jinnah of Pakistan” was published in 1984. This unique and insightful biography explores the fascinating public and private life of founder of Pakistan, Muhammad Ali Jinnah from his birth in 1876 till his death in 1948. In recording the events that unfold and shape Jinnah’s life, Wolpert also chronicles almost eight decades of Indian history to the point where India achieves independence from British rule amid growing Muslim-Hindu antagonism.

It is a tragedy that the new generation of Pakistan knows about the founder of their country only through text books, a few websites and television programs. These limited resources do not tell the complete picture of a very intelligent, shrewd and resilient lawyer, politician and statesman who altered the map of South Asia through his sheer indomitable will against all odds.

It is almost a standard statement in Pakistani text books that Muhammad Ali Jinnah was a great man but after reading Stanley Wolpert’s “Jinnah of Pakistan” one can get a better understanding of why Jinnah can be.... and should be.... regarded as such a great leader. Physically a frail man, he alone gave courage, hope, strength and voice to millions of Muslims of South Asia who were dismissed as second class citizens in United India before partition in 1947.

The biography is placed on a huge canvas and takes the readers to the bustling port of Karachi where Jinnah was born and follows him to London, Bombay, Calcutta, Lucknow, Nagpur, Amritsar, New Delhi, Simla, Lahore, Peshawar, Quetta, Ziarat and finally Karachi again where lies buried “one of history’s most remarkable, tenacious, enigmatic figures.”

The book reveals Jinnah’s failings, his loneliness, his pain, his broken marriage, his estrangement from his only daughter, his long and fatal disease which he kept under wraps and yet the true worth of his gigantic accomplishment can only be more appreciated when viewed alongside his human weaknesses.

The book also brings under spotlight, Jinnah’s love and marriage to the beautiful and vivacious “flower of

Bombay" Ruttie. The whole episode is dealt with great deal of compassion as Wolpert gives a rare glimpse into Jinnah's most private moments and thoughts____ and his ultimate pain when due to Jinnah's extremely demanding political and legal career, the marriage breaks down and ends with Ruttie's tragic death when she was only 29.

An excerpt from the book: "It (the funeral) was a painfully slow ritual. Jinnah sat silent through all of its five hours. As Ruttie's body was being lowered into the grave, Jinnah as the nearest relative was the first to throw the earth on the grave. He broke down suddenly and wept and sobbed like a child for minutes together. That was the only time when I found Jinnah betraying some shadow of human weakness."

The best thing about the book is that is very impartial and does not gloss over any facts or resort to hyperbole. Like an artist who creates a masterpiece with careful strokes of his paintbrush, Wolpert also records small anecdotes and major incidents to show Jinnah's shrewd and skilful leadership as well his single-minded tenacity to win his case for the creation of Pakistan on behalf of the Muslims of South Asia.

For this great and engrossing biography, Stanley Wolpert has won a great deal of gratitude from those who have read and enjoyed this book. 'Jinnah of Pakistan' is an absolute must read for the students of political history of South Asia and for every Pakistani who is interested in knowing the extent of debt owed to Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah for freedom and a separate country after the end of British Raj in the sub-continent.

Jinnah of Pakistan Details

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From Reader Review Jinnah of Pakistan for online ebook

Aziz Khan says

Jinnah, in post WW-II scenario, proved himself to be the wisest amongst the politicians and freedom strugglers in the subcontinent. India was awakening to get independence from British Empire which by then had become too weak, administratively and militarily, to prolong their rule. India had to be left to self rule by native leadership. It was here that Jinnah foresaw the future turbulent political mood in the polity of India. The life of Jinnah was driven by sheer logic and principles. Law studies and practices made his mind work on constitutional lines. Jinnah, gentleman in his outlook, fair in manners but very sharp at mind and winner on negotiation table created Pakistan at the time of "the shameful flight" of British.

Amongst the prominent political figures of Pre independence India like Gandhi, Nehru, Vallabhai Patel, his stature stands tallest for he primarily added his successes on the blunders of his rivals.

To surmount the difficulties of the time, when British ruled and Congress seemed to be the obvious heir to the next rule of India was to take up the task as underdog right from the beginning. Jinnah did so.

Champion of Hindu-Muslim cause once had made up his mind to create a country-state where right of the Muslims can be safeguarded as Congress had shown total disregard to the Muslim demands like separate electorates. Under Gandhi's leadership All India Congress had done nothing to accommodate Muslims or assent to safeguards of Muslim rights.

Ironically he or All India Muslim League never enjoyed overwhelming majority in any of the Indian province. He had before him, this magnanimous task of unifying all Muslims under one banner and to have the right to represent the case of Muslims of All India.

Stanley Wolpert's words at the preface of the book holds true that "Few individuals significantly alter the course of history. Fewer still modify the map of the world. Hardly anyone can be credited with creating a nation-state. Jinnah did all three".

Nabeel Tahir says

A fascinating book that elucidates the life of Jinnah without any prejudices and preconceived notions. It has helped me, as a Pakistani, understand my great leader. His life, his trials and tribulations. The successes he achieved and the perseverance he demonstrated in the face of unimaginable opposition and adversity are admirable and inspiring.

Zarish Fatima says

one of the history's most tenacious enigmatic figures.

Every Pakistani knows quite a bit about Muslim League History and final 10 years before partition. We have to. But there are many things we never hear. Quaid started as Muslim-Hindu unity ambassador. Was young, intelligent and a great believer of the constitution. He spent 24 years of his life struggling for Hindu Muslim unity denying all those who thought otherwise. Every effort was repudiated by the Congress and its leadership. It took 24 years of endless arguments, debates, conferences, dialogues and destruction of his marriage and loss of woman he loved to convince him that his endeavors were in vain. While reading this book I realized exactly how much humiliation he faced. How many doors were slammed on his face and how many times he was discarded, along with his opinions. Even after all that he kept his head high, he knew how

to keep his composure and never to lose an argument, even though those arguments fell on deaf ears and he lost most of his early fights.

Then comes the second phase of his life, in which he appears as proud, vain, whimsical man. who remained adamant on his "crazy" demands as dubbed by the British viceroys, secretaries and governors of late 1930s and 1940s. Most Britishers thought of him as self indulgent man, who wanted glory. He was unreasonable, never had a valid argument and was most uncooperative. By this time Quaid had figured out that wasting his strained breath on people who would never actually listen to him even when they claimed differently was useless. He had already spent too much of his life arguing with them and had been utterly fruitless. He in 1940s isolated himself, hiding his deteriorating health. Also he had lost complete trust in Congress and had grown a bit paranoid even of his own party leadership. He was a man who had been betrayed one too many times and was not about to lose this time around. And he did not. He lost his health, and his only daughter but did not lose this final fight. Many thought that Pakistan was his obsession one last attempt to show his rivals who and humiliated him, his true worth.

But people have known to talk and they will always, had always, would always, one thing is for sure a country can not be built on a man's vanity and whim. It takes determination, will and loyalty to a true cause. All of which he had. Quaid was nothing if he was not, strategic, persistent and intent.

Mountbatten, the reason of the bloodiest partition of Punjab. Termed Jinnah as psychopathic man, who wanted nothing more than to be Governor General himself, Odd thing for him to say as he had shown strong desire to be GG of not one but two subcontinental domains at the same time!! Never the less Jinnah made his point with Bhattens multiple times. In being photographed at Bhattens Jinnah insisted that Lady Mountbatten should stand between him and the lord but the Lord and Lady insisted that Jinnah must stand between them. Which Quaid termed as *a rose between two thorns* what i would not give to see the expression on the faces of those insolent people, when Quaid made that pun.

There are few things i had problem on in this book. Number one whenever it comes to loss of the life of Hindus the writer gave figures but when it came to the massacre of Muslims the writer took great pains to keep the figures and religion of the deceased fuzzy. Many Muslim unfortunately and shamefully acted as hooligans but the crime against Muslims were 3 fold worse and organized and that was just the year of 47. There is no accounting before that and not to mention the horribleness in Calcutta the year before. And district of Gurdaspur, a Muslim Majority area given on purpose to India where Muslims were killed so extensively that they were whipped out.

Also the presidential address of Quaid **"You are free, you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques ... all members of the Nation."** The writer questions what was he thinking about, when he said this? was he pleading for united India? why would he talk about religious harmony equality and unity and freedom when millions were migrating towards a "Muslim" state. Well answer is this Pakistan was to be free place for Muslims a place where discrimination on the bases given above would not exist and be condemned. He was not pleading for united India he was pleading for the brutality taking place on the both sides of border to stop. He wanted a Muslim state that stood for everything which had been denied to Muslims in one way or another. A state which would not treat its minorities the way they had been treated before.

All and all it was good book. There is not much on Quaid's personal life, he was a very private man. Also a man who worked from 14 to 18 hours and even went to office at 8:30 in morning at age of 71 with cancer in his body hard for him to have a personal life. He had many allies even more followers and even greater number of admirers but he had very few friends. And one companion his sister. He is the least talked about leader, least studied and least admired leader. Never the less he was a single man who brought the most unlikely people to work together and made a weak party into the 2nd largest party of the India and placed Pakistan on the map. If that man was not one of the greatest leader of the modern world than i do not know who is.

Hasan says

A dry but necessary read (and most complete biography) on a man that is hardly a part of the international discussion but is the single reason for why Pakistan exists on the map today. According to Wolpert, Jinnah did what no man had ever done before and what no man will likely do again, carve out a nation-state all by himself. MA Jinnah espoused a liberal ideology of the country that he founded, not dissimilar to the rights espoused by the American Constitution, one that his countrymen have refused to follow to this very day. If Pakistan ever turns the ship around from its current position of hopelessness, it will be because they finally heeded the lessons of their enlightened founder.

Joe says

This book contains a lot of information about what Jinnah thought, what he said, and what others said about him, however it seems that a lot of the more interesting parts that would get into his personality and some of the non-political aspects of his life were left out. The barrage of details about what was said at almost every meeting he ever attended makes the book exceptionally dry and at times difficult to read.

Elena says

I never finished it (of course) but this-and the whole partition if India thing-is a fascinating story with a bitter ending. Pakistan was created as a Muslim nation (Jinnah would have argued it was secular at the government level, though) and the consequences were disastrous for Sikhs and Hindus there and Muslims who stayed in India. Israel was created around the same time. Take note, Israel...

Sajjad Haider says

Excellent insight on the Journey and changing thought of the man, Jinnah.

Bushra says

At the start, the book just felt like a chapter from Pakistan Studies text book. Besides, at start I found the account, a typical book with praises for Jinnah and villainizing of his opponents. I gave up on the first 50 pages. But the recent blowing up of Jinnah's residency motivated me to explore who the man really was. And as explored page by page, this was the first account of Jinnah I find no difficulty to believe in. As the charming, eloquent, intelligent and always wining advocate turns into a stubborn, cold, and egoistic man, who was so used to of the idea of winning that failure wasn't a choice. Those who have read the book would agree that I'm not denouncing Jinnah, I'm instead praising him!

He was the most extraordinary man this land could ever produce.

Natasha says

A very fascinating tale that's unfolding slowly,
the most interesting thing is reading about Jinnah as a person, since history is full of his political deeds but very less is known about his personality.
a treat for Jinnah fans!

Risha says

4.75 stars.

I don't really write reviews but I felt I should for this one. This was my first biography on Jinnah (and definitely not the last) and I learnt so much about him that surprised me. What I loved most about this account is the fact that Jinnah is not presented as an infallible superhero but in all his human complexity. The book made me realize how true the accusations of the state distorting history textbooks are.

The politics take center stage in the book in all their amoral "glory(?)". The writer wants the reader to know that for Jinnah, Pakistan was built as as much of a slap on the Congress's face as for the Muslims in India. He wants to make it clear that the people were moved (in masses) by the League after the decision to build a Muslim nation was taken. Jinnah was a talented, brilliant man who was not appreciated in the party he had decided to dedicate his life to. Therefore, it's almost like he decided to show them what they had lost and make them pay for it. Wolpert shows Jinnah as a man driven almost as much by his ego as by his brilliance and political comprehension. That's the thing about brilliance, it demands appreciation.

Most of all, it explains clearly one of Jinnah's most mystifying qualities. How can I man, so adamantly secular, the "Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity", could adopt such a religious (bordering, as portrayed in the book, to an almost extremist zeal) approach? The answer is difficult to explain in a few words, although it is definitely not that Jinnah was a devout Muslim himself. He went through many, many changes in his life because of a number of events. The "betrayal" of the Congress coincided with the League's respect and the path was clear for Jinnah.

All in all, this is a very insightful account of Jinnah's life. Highly recommended.

Anish Sharma says

Note : I skipped over the initial few chapters that were on the beginning years of Mr Jinnah's life. So the review is principally on the second half of the book which i find more interesting.

I have no particular answer as to what i find so fascinating about Mr Jinnah, but i have lately discovered that i enjoy reading about him words after words, pages after pages.

This book in particular is famous for being unbiased in its depiction of the man under discussion and

rationally takes us through the events that shaped this gigantic man and how he shaped the gargantuan events in the modern life of this majestic subcontinent. His cold demeanor, urbanity, leadership skills and resoluteness has often awed me. I wonder what he would make of his own life if he were to judge it. A Fight, A victory, A Failure or as i see it as An inexplicable Enigma.

Abubakar Mehdi says

wow , this biography of Jinnah is much better then the one written by Hector Bolitho. It is detailed and very well researched. I also felt that the writer had a very deep knowledge about the politics in British India, and this made the book a very precise document on political history of subcontinent under British rule and the subsequent independence of Pakistan and india. A must read for every Pakistani.

Naveed says

Jinnah is one of the most "untouched" and "unexplored" yet one of the great leaders of the world. Only Stanley Wolpert and Jaswant Singh have enlightened his leadership calibre and strength of his chracter, will power and vision. Great book to know more about Jinnah. I suggest reading it along with Jaswant Singh's book on Jinnah and you will get to know more about this great leader. I wonder why remained unnoticed amongst the other global leaders of his era. He surely stands taller than most of global leaders of his era.

Ahmed Malik says

One of the best books ever. Wolpert complements on Mr. Jinnah's life and at the same time gives us an amazing timeline story of all the events that took place for the partition of the subcontinent. He literally takes us back in time.

After reading this I feel like we really dont know anything about our greatest leader. Its sad that a British did so much research on our great man and not us. We really are a lost nation...the most unaware about our past.

Zeshan Syed says

Quaid e Azam, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, is the most iron willed Pakistani I have ever met. That's right! Reading this account of the Quaid's life is nothing short of actually meeting the person in real life. The account is as vividly detailed as it can get. After reading this, it would no longer come as a surprise that an enigmatic and eccentric person such as Jinnah succeeded in carving out Pakistan out of a cesarean procedure done on the then unstable subcontinent bleeding from the strife predominantly between Hindus and Muslims. This book would help the reader, besides learning about the personal and political life of the Quaid, develop an objective view of the process of the birth of Pakistan, and of the current situation that has prevailed ever since the great divide.

The book starts from the birth of the person who was Jinnah. Takes us to London where Jinnah developed a taste for acting and out of respect for his father's opinion, opted for a lawyer's profession. We are then immersed into the passionate transformation of a lawyer into a visionary who, through his fatalistic legal

charms and a razor like focus, would work 14 hours a day laboring in nothing other than the dream of achieving Pakistan, developing life long rivalries, and dealing single-handedly with Indian political giants such as Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. The last section of the book is about the last year of the Quaid's life, after the creation of Pakistan, in Quetta, Lahore and Karachi where he was finally laid to rest in peace.

The Pakistani reader feels an emotional connection with the Quaid and regardless of his/her opinion on the creation of Pakistan, feels an optimistic obligation to the nation literally "gifted" to us. The average reader would learn from the fatal negotiation tactics and the political maneuvers applied by Jinnah in leading his life and in creation of Pakistan.

I would recommend this book to open minded readers eager to learn the history of Pakistan from a personal perspective through Jinnah's life.
