

Book Review

MOHAMMAD ALI JINNAH An Ambassador of Unity

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Book Title: Mohammad Ali Jinnah an Ambassador of Unity: His Speeches & Writings 1912-1917

Author: Sarjini Naidu

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Pages: 208

Review

The book under review is an autobiography of Muhammad Ali Jinnah covering the period from 1912 to 1917. The author of the book, Mrs Sarojini Naidu commonly known as *Bharatiya Kokila (The Nightingale of India)*, was a freedom fighter, and poet. She was the first Indian woman that led the way for women in Indian politics and her birthday is celebrated as "Women's Day" in India. She is remembered as a champion of women's rights, and Hindu-Muslim unity. Her book under review can be testified as an attribute to Muhammad Ali Jinnah's first phase of political life. Though the book brings forth Jinnah's role as an ambassador of the unity in question but ignores to unearth the causes that forced him to distance himself from the Congress agenda and become the torch bearer of separate home land for Muslims of India- a land that is free from the clutches of Hindu hegemonic mindset. However, in-depth look in to the speeches and writings one is provoked to find out the events, attitude and the mind set that led in to conversion of a staunch Indian nationalist in to a chief proponent of independent Muslim homeland. The detailed understanding of these speeches can help reader of history to comprehend the logic and rational behind the stage wise progression of Pakistan movement and its gathering momentum in very short spell of time. The biography is first of its own kind and none of any Indian or Pakistani

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politician/Member of Parliament has ever ventured an objective evaluation of Jinnah's vision of united India and Hindu-Muslim unity. The book in its over 200 pages carries the theme that Jinnah entered politics in India in 1905 and by 1917 his charisma and diplomacy had made him a national leader and the most visible supporter of Hindu-Muslim unity.

The book, '*Mohammad Ali Jinnah an ambassador of Unity*', is compilation of the speeches of Mohammad Ali Jinnah which he delivered at different occasions in between 1912 to 1917. Besides, the speeches, the book also contains few of the selected writings of Jinnah pertaining to that period when his all energies were directed to pursue for Hindu-Muslim unity. The period marks an era and a political mind set of Jinnah that how was he looking the problem and future of India at that time. The book is a tribute to Muhammad Ali Jinnah not as an Indian Nationalist rather an Indian who is proud to be an Indian nationalist. The book can also be viewed as a mirror that reflects Mrs Naidu's earnest desire to promote and see Hindu-Muslim unity not only nurturing in subcontinent rather, flourishing a joint movement with common cause of getting India free from the clutches of Great Britain. The book is a unique book that besides other matter, helps reader to have an insight into the forthright and fearless conviction and courage of Quaid e Azam and his command over the socio-political and socio-economic dimensions related to diversified ethnic groups in general and Muslims in particular. The book is a stepping stone to comprehend Jinnah's political and parliamentary vision as a democrat who, because of his God gifted eschewed mind and political skills, stood above the shoulders than other political taboos of that time.

After returning to India, he practiced law and was elected to India's Imperial Legislative Council in 1910. Committed to home rule for India and to maintaining Hindu-Muslim unity, he joined the Muslim League in 1913 and worked to ensure its collaboration with the Indian National Congress. He was opposed to Mohandas K. Gandhi's non-cooperation movement and withdrew from the Congress. It was Jinnah who, in February 1915, brought Hindus and Muslims close together in a bid to commemorate Gokhale's death as a common loss and sorrow for Hindus and Muslim both. It was that occasion when the ambassador of unity confessed in a priceless moment of self revelation that 'it is my ambition to become the Muslim Gokhale'. In an attempt to further closeness and reconciliation between Indian National Congress and all India Muslim League, he persuaded Muslim League to hold its annual session scheduled in December 1915 at Bombay. These simultaneous sessions- a joint effort to find lasting solution of Hindu Muslims differences and cooperation, were brought

about with no little labor, anxiety and trouble. And Jinnah was the moving force and binding spirit behind the arrangements of these sessions at one time and one place. His address, later as President of All India Muslim League, at Lucknow in 1916 consummates his irrefutable faith in the vision of a free and federated India. The Lucknow address raised him to prominence in the Indian National Congress expounding ideas of Hindu-Muslim unity and helping shape the 1916 Lucknow Pact with the Muslim League; he also became a key leader in the All India Home Rule. He proposed a fourteen- point constitutional reform plan to safeguard the political rights of all. Jinnah was the architect of the 1916 Lucknow Pact between the Congress and the League, bringing them together on most issues regarding self-government and presenting a united front to the British. Jinnah also played an important role in the founding of the All India Home Rule League in 1916. Along with political leaders Annie Besant and Tilak, Jinnah demanded "home rule" for India—the status of a self-governing dominion in the Empire similar to Canada, New Zealand and Australia. He headed the League's Bombay Presidency chapter.

In October 1916 while presiding over the 16th Bombay Provincial conference at Ahmadabad Mr Jinnah was very loud and clear when declared that real progress of India lies in the goodwill, concord, harmony and cooperation between the two great sister communities. The true focus of their progress is to be centered in their union. Therefore, he urged for the unity amongst Hindus and Muslims to effect legitimate and constitutional transfer of power from Britain. He called for a thorough political union among the Indian people of all creeds and classes. The thorough union, therefore, of all the people for their emancipation is an absolute necessity. They must sink or swim together. Without this union, all efforts will be vain. Jinnah reiterated this call for national unity at every political meeting he attended in those years, and he emerged as true Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity.

Muhammad Ali Jinnah during his stay in London, founded the London Indian Association in order to get focused otherwise scattered energies and activities of Indian youth at foreign land. His demonstrated behavior till 1920 testifies that his loyalty to Muslim League and Muslim interest would in no way and at no time imply even the shadow of disloyalty to the national cause of Indian independence. It was in acknowledgment of his mental qualities, lucid arguments, and dedication to national cause that he was chosen to be the spokesman of articulate India before the representatives of British Parliament and the British public. In the late 1920s and early '30s, he was seen as too moderate by some Muslims but too Muslim by the

Congress Party. From 1937, when the Congress Party refused to form coalition governments with the Muslim League in the provinces, Jinnah began to work for the partitioning of India and on creating a Muslim state. Pakistan emerged as an independent country in 1947, and Jinnah became its first head of state. He died in 1948, revered as the father of the nation.

Conclusion

A glance over these speeches and given writings one can easily find a marked difference in Jinnah's opinion and ideas and from those he developed later after experiencing Hindu mentality prevalent at that time. The future founder of Pakistan was first known as the ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity. Jinnah entered politics in India in 1905 and by 1917 his charisma and diplomacy had made him a national leader and the most visible supporter of Hindu-Muslim unity. His strong belief in gradual and peaceful change was in contrast to the civil disobedience strategies of Mohandas Gandhi, and in the '20s Jinnah broke from the Indian National Congress to focus on an independent Muslim state. Indeed Jinnah only resigned from Congress in 1920 when he became disillusioned with the violence and communal passions unleashed by Gandhi's Congress-Khilafat civil disobedience campaigns. The division widened in 1928 when the Nehru Report rejected Jinnah's "fourteen points" constitutional proposals. These speeches reflect the political as well as the social, educational, economic and cultural landscape prevailing at that time. The reader of the book listens the echo of those actions taken by Jinnah to unite the Indians, and Naidu's Jinnah biography has been confirmed today by former Indian Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh, when he argues in his recent book '*India, Independence, Partition*' that it was narrow minded congress leadership led by Nehru who kept pushing Muslims towards partitioning, and left no option for Muslims but to have a separate homeland.