

Jaswant and Jinnah: A Critical Review

Jaswant Singh: Jinnah: India – Partition – Independence

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_____ Syed Ali Abbas

Jaswant Singh – formerly a leader of Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP), and Foreign Minister under A. B. Vajpayee has already accredited to himself as auto-biographer of incredible merit. His *A Call to Honour* is a welcome contribution to the family of auto-biographies by Indian politicians. It has earned him fame like many others, internationally. The current book on Jinnah – India – Partition – Independence, although has been subjected to controversies and criticism in India and Pakistan, with hundred of reviews already in print and in air, yet an objective review on the publication seems still wanting.

A long stride from 2006, when *A Call to Honour* appeared, to 2009, the publication of this book on Jinnah, needs an understating of many questions that strike the mind of a reader, particularly believing in what Jaswant Singh himself suggests: “This was during Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee’s historical bus journey to Lahore in 1999. I accompanied the Prime Minister to Minar-i-Pakistan... returning from where I was struck by the thought, there existed no biography of Jinnah written by a political figure from India. It was there I decided to fill the gap” (Acknowledgement). The gap did lengthen but until 2006 his ideas seen in the chapter: “From the Same Womb: Pakistan (Book I:2, *A Call to Honour*) are largely different from “The Seed to the Bomb and Pakistan Identity” (P:71) from what he examines in his analysis on Jinnah. True, the former book begins his criticism on Pakistan with its birth and the latter ended

in September 1948 with the death of Quaid-i-Azam. But the flow of undercurrent in the mind of a person believing in the philosophy of BJP cannot possibly be immuned of an objective analysis. Nevertheless, the extremist thinking on various issues which are so visible in "From the Same Womb" are differently poised in *Jinnah: India-Partition-Independence*, (the book under review). This book contains ten chapters, besides Introduction and In Retrospect at the end, and as many as seventeen appendices.

In his opening pages discussing briefly Indo-Islamic History, the author examines Muslim conquests with sword of the vast empire, they had built within almost a century after the death of the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.). Western (Sind) and northern India was run over by them, and "in a frenzy of Islamic zeal destroying what ever non-Islamic structure or symbol fell their way". (p.4). True, but the large scale conversion in India amongst the local population to Islam was not because of the sword of the Muslim conquests. On the contrary it was under the peaceful movement of Muslim mystics: Suharwardia, Chishtia and Qadiriya, which attracted the masses to their shrines, then and even today. They are still the great centres of Indian spiritual abode, religious seminaries and worship. In south India (Kerala and Malabar) no Muslim conquest ever effected the hundreds and thousands of conversions to Islam which also spread widely around, during the later periods of history. The Muslims of today's India are the inheritors of their predecessors in all traits of Muslim social, religious and cultural life, which distinguish them from others, without creating any hindrance in loyalty to their mother land (Janambhumi).

The Muslims of India had a cultural and political identity for the last a thousand years. It was never challenged by any non-Muslims suzeriegn under the Mughuls or even under the later Mughuls when the fugitive Shah Alam II (the Mughul king) was visiting Rajputs and other non-Muslim states in northern and central India. History tells us how Balaji Baji Rao Sindhia, the Maratha Chief, carried the shoes of Shah Alam II on his head from Allahabad to Delhi, in the later 18th Century, all on foot, with thousands of followers behind. May it be for political reasons or whatever, but it of course was an illustration of respect, reverence and regard of a non-Muslim prince for a

Muslim symbolic king, a shadow of the past Mughul glory, irrespective of Sivaji's renowned Mughul hostility.

A cultural revolution did come in India with the coming of the British and with the identity of their common commercial interest in Indian non-Muslim commercial classes, who under joint machination and conspiracies, turned down the table against Siraj-ud-Daula of Bengal, to become masters of the land. Those who suffered most from this revolution were Muslims, and those who benefited from the change were Hindus who became a Nation, with the birth of the Indian National Congress (1885) fathered by A. O. Hume. Did it change the political spectrum of the Muslim as a Nation? No it did not. Had it been so, the Hindu religious political and militant movements of the 19th Century would not come on to reconvert converted Muslim to their original faith. The outrageous attacks on the Muslim by the Hindu militants under *Shudhi* and *Sanghton* movements were only under fear of a Muslim nation which might again emerge strongly in India. The Indian National Congress was enjoying the fruits of the legislative concessions offered to them by England in 1892. But they, over obsessed with feelings that Muslims being reduced to a minority community, under the British socio-political system, could not be entitled to any concession under separate electorates, granted to them in 1909.

The Hindu militancy never appeared before 1947 against any other religious minority, only because they never apprehended any political motives behind them challenging Hindu political ambitions. It was also the craze for Hindu political domination that Quaid-i-Azam trapped the Congress leaders under the principle of weightage to obtain recognition of the Congress for Muslim's separate electorates. Infact the Quaid had the vision that only this recognition of the Congress implied the recognition of Muslims as a Nation, which proved true subsequently after the Lahore Resolution. The Quaid, indeed, tested the intentions of the Indian National Congress with Delhi proposals, and with some amendments to the Nehru Report but the Congress being under the influence of the extremist factions, rejected all of them, leaving little alternative for Jinnah, but to think of a separate state, envisioned by Allama Iqbal in 1930.

Jaswant Singh is amazed, how could a person believing in Hindu Muslim unity, become a communalist? "What quest,

which urge there after made Jinnah travel the road to its very antipadal extreme...?" The answer is very simple. The Congress and the Hindu extremists threatened the very right of the Muslims living in peace, denying them any self-respect as Muslims, with frequent attacks upon them, their religious institutions and gathering throughout India, particularly during the Congress rule (1937-39), well examined by Sharif, Pirpur and Fazl-ul-Haq Reports. How could then, Muslim be saved form such a tyranny? Pakistan was the answer, and it has proved as such till todate that there are so many people who can still stand to answer questions raised by extremist Indians, doubting the logic of partition.

Jaswant Singh has yet another question on Muslim Nationalism as defined and claimed by the Quaid-i-Azam. Indeed all Indian Muslims were a part of a Muslim nation, even the Nationalist Indian Muslims like Asif Ali, Kidwai and Azad, though struck to the folds of the Congress, yet, never disowned that they were not a part of Muslim nation or that they belonged only to the Muslim minority community. All what is visible from Azad's statements and particularly his famous book *India Wins Freedom* that the Nationalist Muslim did not recognize Quaid-i-Azam as their leader? Reasons behind this were many but mainly complexes against a person who had politically outwitted many great contemporary stalls in the field. The agitational politics of the Congress since early thirties could not possibly make a head way under any brilliance of the Congress astitute High Command, unless the mediation of the Congressites in Viceroy's Council did not bring them to the negotiation table for a mutually agreed formula. This was the character of Indian freedom struggle before and after World War II, whether in the Quit India Movement or through the contribution of the Indian National Army of Sobash Chandra Bose fighting England alongwith the Japanese. Cripps Offer, Wavell Scheme and later Cabinet Mission Plan were not the outcome of Congress's agitational politics but only a politico strategical necessity of the British in helping them out of the international pressure.

Jaswant Singh laments how the unity of India was broken through the Partition and its past single entity torne off. But apart from a short period of the British rule, India was never under a single rule, not even under Kanishka, Chandra Gupta Mauriya,

Vikramaditya, Akbar or Aurangzeb. Distant regions remained aloof even then. Once Burma and Sri Lanka were also under the British rule. But they were separated and they never remained part of India.

However, Jaswant Singh could have a brighter prospect before him thinking of a better future for all the people of the sub-continent. If India stops justifying the wrongs done by her sixty years ago and give the Kashmiri people their right of self-determination, India Pakistan and Bengaladesh could still come closer to build a strong economic unit of South Asia, irrespective of separate sovereign states. It needs nothing but just toning down the ego which India has kept up for so long at the cost of the poor Kashmiri people, let downing the poor masses of the two countries.

Chapter I

India and Islam carries Jaswant Singh's confused ideas of the Introduction with some details again questioning his basic point whether or not Muslims were a nation. How could people who came to invade India and settled here thereafter, could become Indian nationals: He is forgetting that those who claimed to be a nation in their own merit, were large number of Muslim converts from Hindu religion to Islam over the centuries, which many Hindu scholars did take notice of, and explained them, with a number of reformatory movements in the Hindu religious, social and cultural system. This chapter, not with standing its detailed discussions, is a repetition of the spirit of nationhood examined in the Introduction. Islam or Islamic spirit and culture is difficult for non-Muslims to understand and all the more unintelligible to realise its importance and impact. Some Indian politicians used the Quranic scripts politically in their discussion, Mahatma Gandhi used them in his public address frequently during the Khilafat Movement. Even Jaswant Singh quotes one script from the Holy Book in the pre-pages of his autobiography "*A Call to Honour*. And yet, it is unfortunate, he remained ignorant of the great message it passed out to the readers. Islam is what the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) did or some of his selected followers and the progeny practised following his footsteps and not what the Muslim generally do. Muslim political culture and practices have occasionally been wrongly attributed to the

religion. It is therefore, Jaswant Singh feels all what is wrong is Islamic.

Islam is a religion of peace, self articulation for a spirit of sacrifice and service to others. This has well been demonstrated by Sufi saints in India, whether of Suharwardia order, or Chistia or Qadriya. As such they attracted people not merely Muslims but from all other cultures including Hindu, Sikhs and Christians. Their tombs in India are still a centre of attention for humanly needs and desires which keep their faith in them alive. Even the puritan movements of the Naqshbandi Order from 17th to 19th centuries A.D. could not succeed in changing the passions of emotionalism reflected at these shrines. Where is the message of aggression Jaswant Singh has ever received from these tombs of the Muslims saints who converted millions and millions of Hindus to Islam, burning a huge candle in their heart for their love for the Holy Prophet and his progeny, without even learning the basic tenets of the religion. It was this Islam which appeared in India and the orthodox feeling it dangerous to their own cult tried to introduce reforms in them which Jaswant Singh notes (p.32). None of these reforms proved effective in India till today. But Jaswant Singh is worried since these movements successfully resisted Hindu militant aggressions in the name of *Shudhi* and *Sanghton* movements. Whereas the common man amongst the Muslims remained quiet despite his sufferings, in the communal riots, a frequent feature in India for the last over a century and a half. The era of 20s in the 20th century is called the era of the most wide spread riots before the Pakistan emergence, and the year 1926 was exemplary for the spread of riots throughout India.

Jaswant Singh rightly suggests that “the Muslims of India’s medieval cultures never thought of themselves as a unit and certainly never acted as one”. This was so because nationalist concepts were born only in the nineteenth century. Hindus, too, did not presume themselves from a similar national outlook except after the birth of the Indian National Congress. And even then the nationalism of India was restricted only to the feelings of the educated classes of Bengal or other Presidency towns. If then Indian Nationalism was a product of an encouragement from A.O. Hume, rather than being indigenous, then, why should there be a question mark against Muslim nationalism? It may

also appear and be visible if the blurred glasses under communal prejudice be washed out to have a clearer vision. Muslim claim for a separate representation was alike the Congress's request for more legislative concession from the Government of India and the Home Government granted to, in 1892 first and then in 1909. Further, the author being earlier a high ranking diplomat and former Foreign Minister of India is well aware of the norm that agreement between parties, of whatever nature and concern, are usual between two equals in status and character. What, there was the basis of the Lucknow Pact of 1916 between the All Indian National Congress and All India Muslim League? How could the Indian National Congress agree to negotiate which did not have an equal status? Any logical mind will be convinced that the Congress had recognized the Muslims as a nation, while conceding to them the separate electorate; their status as a nation was so predetermined. Infact, the language controversy was also a movement in the direction of nationalistic approach. The extremists from amongst the non-Muslims considered Urdu a hindrance in the progressive development of their national religio-cultural outlook, where it mothered the indigenous cultural roots. The Muslims were shocked and even Muslim leaders like Syed Ahmad Khan who frequently professed his concern for non-Muslims, had to yield to the Two Nation Theory, in consequence. It may not be an exaggeration to submit that the Congress leader like Gopal Krishna Gokhle also considered Indian Muslims a separate nation. It was he to suggest communal representation to Minto before 1909 as confessed by Marry, the Lady Minto. (p. 53).

Chapter II

From Jenabhai to Jinnah: A Journey is a simple narration of Jinnah's family background and his early career from School days to the Lincon's Inn. Whereas, the author examines his family background in some details, the traditional commercial activity of an average trader, Jinnah, too, was sent to England for some commercial training. But he preferred to join a professional carrier of practicing law after his successful completion at Bar. Suffice to say that the family background is more positive when individual resolve, determination, and intellectual play stand

behind to distinguish him from the rest. Jinnah was such a focus of many envious eyes casting at him, around.

Jaswant Singh casually notes Jinnah's legal fight for B.G. Tilak and his punishment of six year rigorous imprisonment on seditious activities. It was strongly condemned by him; even refusing to attend the official dinner hosted in honour of Justice Davour, responsible to punish Tilak and granted knighthood in return. (P.76).

Jinnah had joined the All Indian Muslim League in 1913 and three years later he found the opportunity to preside the annual session of the All India Muslim League held at Lucknow, with simultaneous annual session of the All India National Congress. That was an occasion where the two great political parties could make a headway in capturing some common ground on question of self-government, as also on some issues called political and communal problems. It was a task of leadership, understanding, and putting situation before others which could prove attractive, at the same time amicable, and pleasing. Jinnah's recommendations on weightage provided the Congress an opportunity to rule in Muslim majority provinces, existing, and in the offing (with proposed constitutional reforms in the N.W.F.P. and the separation of Sind from Bombay). Jinnah had touched the weak point of the Congress to earn for Muslims the recognition of the communal electorates, which, subsequently the Congress regretted throughout, carrying untiring efforts to undo the same. Jaswant Singh has narrated all this in an ambiguous manner, not letting the reader to obtain a clear picture. (Pp. 87, 102-3).

Chapter III

The turbulent twenties is called turbulent by the author because of the riots that broke out between Hindus and Muslims at Mopla (Malabar) which spread throughout India with the passage of time. This happened in the wake of so called honeymoon between Hindus and Muslims, following the joint venture of the Khilafat movement and the non-Cooperation movement of Mahatma Gandhi. Hindu extremists and militants unhappy over Rowlatt Act and the consequent Jallianwalabagh tragedy were flared up on Mopla rising to kill Muslims at a number of places in the Punjab and the fire set ablazed

throughout. Gandhiji announced withdrawal of his non-violent, non-cooperation movement from jail frustrating the Khilafatists, already depressed with the development of Modern Turkey, abolishing Khilafat. Gandhi's move had left to them no ground to stand on except banking upon the activity of the Indian National Congress (p. 116) Jaswant Singh's apology on behalf of Gandhi, appears on page 154.

But Khilafat and non-cooperation movement is not Jaswant Singh's concern. On the contrary he calls this decade turbulent upon the Congress's disappointments over (i) Constitutional Reforms of 1919 implemented in 1921, with Dyarchy in the provinces (2) displeasure of the extremists non-Muslims (Congressite and Maha Sabhai) over political advantages to Muslims under separate representation, "one third representation of seats in legislature and services, whereas according to their statistics (The Muslims) were a little more than one fourth;" As such the Indian National Congress had withdrawn her support for the communal representation, recognized in 1916 and refused constitutional reforms in the N.W.F.P. and the separation of Sind from Bombay. The Congress legislative group in the Imperial Assembly had resolved to wreck the functioning of the Government from within. The hard liners raised the slogans of complete independence of India, notwithstanding immediate response to Lord Birkenhead's challenge that all political parties could not possibly agree to one constitution, drafted by one or all the parties collectively. All Parties Convention under the Chairmanship of Moti Lal Nehru, was formed and although Jinnah presented the Delhi Proposals to replace the Lucknow Pact, under severe criticism of the Congress extremists, but they were not accepted by the Congress High Command and its Executive Committee. The same amendments were suggested to the Nehru Report and having been denied, Jinnah took to suggest "This is the parting of our ways". Jaswant Singh's apology to the Congress's indifference to Muslims demand and yet calling Jinnah; an ambassador of unity is in fact playing with history. Congress was carrying out agitational politics since 1920 and the liberal Congressite had moved backward to give way to the Swarajists who presumed that they could perhaps achieve the goal single handed without taking much notice of the Muslim claim to safeguard their rights. Jaswant Singh provides enough

details justifying the extremists, against communal electorates and the Muslim demands, explaining how Hindu Mahasabha and in particular Lala Lajpat Rai published 13 articles in the Daily Tribune criticizing Muslims and finally proposed the partition of the Punjab and Bengal as Hindu and Muslim provinces. This meant thereby that the extremist Hindus did consider Muslims as a separate nation. What made then, Jaswant Singh to think otherwise?

Jaswant Singh also concedes the prevailing Hindu bias and prejudice against Muslims which Jinnah failed to remove. (P. 138). Jaswant Singh, more skillfully playing up the policy of the Congress, and the other hardliner Hindu groups on the question of Constitutional reforms, reflected unintelligible “Jinnah’s original intentions” (by no means clear then)”. Perhaps, he does not want to recognize Jinnah’s demand for the Muslims from the Delhi Proposals to the Calcutta Convention, offering the same amendments in the Nehru Report again rejected by them. Jaswant had explicitly portrayed all this, also showing how much painful was all that for Jinnah. (P. 148).

Chapter IV

Sharpening Focus -Narrowing Options:

In 1920 when Canada, Australia and New Zealand were granted Dominion Status, the Indian National Congress also started clamouring for the same status for India which the Home Government considered pre-mature in Constitutional Reforms. The Government of India Act of 1919 promised Constitutional revision after ten years and with the announcement of the Statutory Commission, the political circles in India were expecting the Dominion Status. But the non-inclusive of any Indian member in the Royal Commission caused agitation in India and all political parties with some exception at provincial level, boycotted the Commission. Jinnah did not join the Congress as Jaswant Singh suggest, but he, like many other constitutionalist, considered the English parliamentary move, underrating Indian political aspiration. The Congress extremist began claiming complete independence of India but the Government of India resolved to sort out the disappointment of the Indian National Congress, after the publication of the Simon Report, to convene Round Table Conference, represented by the

all political groups, important socio-religious sections of society, princely states, and individuals of distinctive stature in society. The Statutory Report had, whereas rejected all Indian demands in political aspiration, only transferring the Dyarchy in the provinces to the centre and granting some restricted autonomy to the provinces. On the contrary, the Muslims were granted separate electorates and all other constitutional rights agreed to between the All India Muslim League and the Indian National Congress in 1916. The Non-Cooperation movement of Mahatma Gandhi was renewed, resulting in many arrests. But following the boycott of the Indian National Congress of the first Round Table Conference, Lord Irwin, with the help of Jayakar and other Congressite liberal members of the Viceroy's Executive Council, brought the Gandhi-Irwin Pact under which all internees of the Congress extremists were released from jail and Gandhi became the sole representative of the Indian National Congress in the 2nd Round Table Conference.

Jaswant Singh portrays how the Swarajists (people claiming complete independence) and the constitutionalists (demanding Dominion Status), ran parallel movements in support of their claim and Jawaharlal Nehru laments doubts about the 'hastely conceived resolution for Indian independence and 'thoughtfully passed' (P. 150). According to him Tej Bahadur Sapru and Motilal Nehru, besides Jinnah, were only a few who disagreed with the resolution of independence. Incidentally, Mahatma Gandhi was also against the claims of complete independence. Rather, he was more realistic to be craving for Dominion Status, which offended Nehru. Under vision of Socialism, he remained a captive of its spell during the last days of twenties and early thirties. Jaswant Singh has praised his idealism as nothing but complete independence was the solution to the multi-natured problems, India was facing then. Nehru had recently returned from his European tour, obsessed with feelings of freedom and national outlook. All those who did not see eye to eye with him, were mislead. He did not consider that there was any communal problem in India. The basic issue was economic. Hindus and Muslims together suffered from poverty and hunger, which could not be solved under alien rule. Jawaharlal Nehru's influence on the main congressite can be judged from one single event that his father, Motilal Nehru, and Tej Bahadru Sapru

along with other liberals of the Indian National Congress who were sympathetic to the Muslim demands altogether rejected Jinnah's fourteen points presented at the All Parties Muslim Conference. Motilal informed Gandhi (August 1929) "I am quite clear in my own mind that the only way to reach a compromise with the Nationalist Muslims, is to ignore Jinnah and Ali Brothers all together." (P. 166).

Jaswant Singh also negates Simon Commission, granting communal electorates. "The Reports did not even consider the Muslim demands for majorities by separate electorates in Punjab and Bengal", (P. 172) as also not recognizing other demands of the separation of Sind from Bombay and Constitutional Reforms in N.W.F.P. He examines in detail the circumstances leading to the Round Table Conference, reflecting upon Jinnah." Mr. Jinnah's position in the Round Table Conference was unique. The Hindus thought he was a Muslim communalist, the Muslims took him to be pro Hindu, the princes branded him to be too democratic, the British considered him a rabbit extremist. With the result that he was every where but nowhere, none wanted him" (P.182). The above statement is thereafter supported by another statement from Jinnah's speech in Lahore on 2nd March 1936 "I displeased the Muslim; I displeased my Hindu friends because of the famous 14 points. I displeased the princes because I was deadly against their underhand activities and I displeased the British Parliament because I felt right from the very beginning that I rebelled against it and said that it was all a fraud."(ibid).

Jaswant Singh may have noted such traits of Jinnah to show that he was friendless because he did not compromise. This is true. He was a man of principle, a constitutionalist in a literal sense, who wanted to cooperate with all those who were alike himself fair-minded, and not players of words. Later history proved how Muslims gathered under his banners as a united nation. But he had disappointed Hindus and the English.

The Second Round Table Conference proved an utter failure despite Gandhiji's presence. He represented 'Congress' in all the four sub-committees formed in the process of the constitution making. But Ramsay McDonald had to finally intervene and announce the Communal Awards, again on the basis of the Communal Agreement of 1916. Jaswant Singh skips over the

failure of the Congress on Communal question except the resolution of the Congress to revive the disobedience movement. But this Award had also divided the Hindus by providing the Harijan a separate identity and their representation reserved.

This was most shocking to the Congress and Gandhi's fast until death, did bring some relief to the depressed class with a grant of altogether 148 seats instead of separate constituencies. The Congress eventually failed in her mission to obtain perforce or through negotiations, power at the Centre. Jaswant Singh laments possibilities of an agreement on Dominion Status which could not be matured due to absence of Jinnah and Gandhi. (P. 200).

Jaswant Singh projection of an "out standing" "animity" between Jawaharlal Nehru and Jinnah. "Jawaharlal Nehru's virulent dislike of Jinnah and his constant stream of correspondence with Gandhi adversial to Muslim interests turned him cynical". When Jinnah demanded reservation of Muslims political rights focused in his 14 points, in the R.T.C. on September 1931, "Jawaharlal branded this 'an amazing farrago of nonsense and narrowminded communalism.'" Jaswant adds "He was even more scatching in his condemnation of Jinnah's 14 points" if I had to listen to my dear friend Mohammad Ali Jinnah talking the most unmitigated nonsense about his 14 points for any length of time I would consider the desirability of retiring to the south sea Islands where there would be some hope meeting with some people who were intelligent enough or ignorant enough not to talk of the 14 points." "How in reality could there be an effective joint working of a Jinnah led League and Nehru led Congress? A parting, a partition had to come eventually". (P. 202).

This exactly is why this book on Jinnah has been written. It was practically beyond the periphery of an extremist thinking that a word of praise be highlighted for a person, responsible for this partition of India. But the post independence politics in India which brought the Indian National Congress and the B.J.P to political confrontation, letting down one another in and out Lok Sabha, even holding the Congress responsible for their mispolicies in not recognizing genuine Muslim demands, and thus throwing them to the wall, desperate for partition. Beating about the bush, when all was over, can only throw some discredit

to a leadership which considered herself the torchbearer in the freedom struggle. Nehru and his family received the Indian recognition when they were elected to power intermittently for more than thirty five years and for seventeen years at a stretch (1947-64). Initially the opposition was divided and scattered. Gradually the extremist groups united and with the formation of B.J.P. a new political force emerged which tasted power lately and became a strong power claimant in India. And yet the Congress had the strong base to claim that they won Indian independence. How this claim could be discredited? This book has the answer. Jaswant Singh has so cleverly manufactured the characters of the Congress leadership, particularly Jawaharlal Nehru's that he did not mind saying many truths about Jinnah, which otherwise could not possibly come out of the horse's mouth. His political party, if sharp as he is, would have made him hero and leader of the party after Atal Bihari Vajpayee, for he has cumulated enough material against the Congress and its leaderships to propagate during the forth coming election. Even under the present circumstances, the more 'Jinnah' would be studied, the more venom shall be stored against the Congress leadership.

The subsequent five chapters; A Short Decade, A Long End Game, Sunset of the Empire, Post-dated Cheque on a Collapsing Bank; A War of Succession – Diverging Path; Stymied Negotiations and finally Mountbatten's Viceroyalty – The End of the Raj, are extremely interesting, intriguing, and some time provocative readings. Reviewing them in detail should require a hundred pages or so, which may not be possible here. Suffice to concentrate on what Jaswant Singh has said about Jinnah and his activities without reflecting upon the political reactions, particularly of the Congress leadership.

The elections of 1936, under the Government of India Act 1935, were indeed a turning point in Hindu – Muslim relations. Disappointments do help to unite. But political machination to eliminate opposition, despite claim to a genuine representation, create reaction which is extra-ordinary. Jaswant Singh portrays Muslim reaction to the Congress un-towards conduct in the U.P. where All Indian Muslim League was expecting to share the government with the Congress. The humiliating conditions layed down by Congress, noted by Jaswant Singh, from Khaliq-

uzzaman's *Pathway to Pakistan* and concluding by quoting Dr. Zawwar Hussain Zaidi (Pakistan). It revealed the inner dynamics of Indian politics... the most significance of these was the Congress tendency towards a one party polity in India that assumed the subversion of the other Indian parties." (P. 221). But its direct impact was unity of Muslim India and some lessons, rather, revelation about the conduct of the Indian National Congress. Whatever justification, from the point of view of the Congress, 'The rejection of coalition with the League ultimately had disastrous consequences for unity', K.M. Munshi, too, branded it the beginning of the end of united India. (Pilgrimage to Freedom). But the Congress rule in the provinces for a couple of years was much more disastrous than just the pre-conditions to the U.P Muslim Parliamentary Board. Jaswant Singh has evaded even a mention of the Hindu atrocities committed against the Muslims in Provinces under Congress rule. It was difficult because it was his own party components: the R.S.S. and the Jan Saugh, involved in them which he notes as 'riots', responsible for making Muslim League more popular amongst the Muslim masses. Later, the Congress efforts to appease U.P. Muslims failed, meanwhile the outbreak of the World War II, led to the resignation of the Congress ministries, celebrated, as the Day of Deliverance by the Muslim League.

The Congress, earlier in 1937, was extremely keen to take over the control of the Central government by squaring up Viceroy surrounded by Congressmen in his conferere. Linlithgow had long discussion with Jinnah intermittently to convince him to join the Government under viceroy's conditions. But he did not. Federal structure, therefore, remained unimplemented, also because of other reasons including the pending decision of the princely states. With the outbreak of the World War II, the whole scenario changed, and under the disobedience movement, and anti-war activity of the Congress, the stiff attitude of the British Government, and the Government of India seemed also reflecting occasionally. Early setbacks in Europe at the war front obliged England to seek more help from the political parties in India. But the Congress in agitation refused to join and cooperate with the National Defence Council, a proposed organization to promote and manage war-aid efforts in India. The Congress High Command accused England to have

thrusted her war on India, for Germany and Italy had no grievances against India and India had no reasons to cooperate with England to fight an unwanted war. She further asked England to leave India to her fate promoting the Quit India Movement, Muslims, however, cooperated with the British as well as the Government of India, unconditionally. This was why when the All India Muslim League, passed in March 1940, the Lahore Resolution demanding a separate Muslim homeland, they were supported by the famous August (1940) offer a promise in the safeguard of Muslim political and constitutional rights.

Before the Lahore Resolution Jaswant Singh's criticism on Muslim political and constitutional safeguard was negative. But its focus was more on the irrational rigidism of the Congress's anti-Muslim mood, which seemed to have cornered them for a split. After the Lahore Resolution, he turns hostile, to Muslim League and Jinnah, accusing them of re-establishing the sign of chaos in India. "The Pakistan Resolution added to the complexities of the constitutional controversies which the Congress leaders regarded as a simple issue between themselves and the British government". (P. 273). The highest characteristic trait of Jinnah was his dissimulative quality. It was difficult for people, even his closest, to predict about his thinking and feelings. The failure of M.R.A. Baig, despite his association with Jinnah (p 275) in understanding his statements on Islamic State, is no surprise. Jaswant also notes about the Raja Sahib of Mahmudabad, who had been close to Jinnah, but gradually cut off, for the latter would not let him know his plans. True, but few people respected Quaid-i-Azam more than, the Raja Sahib. Jaswant laments writing the effigy of the United India: "With or without real intent this dice of United India had been rolled, and it kept rolling fatefully, from one event to another for the next six eventful years." (277). Jaswant counts all developments from Cripps Mission to the Interim Government (July, 1946) including Wavell Plan and Cabinet Mission Plan, contributing to the Partition. "How could a positive outcome have emerged when all along, we were set to dismember this 'one India' to actually deconstruct it". (p 277).

Cripps had come with the offer of Dominion Status to be implemented when the war was over. The federal representation had to be on the basis of parity between the two big

communities, with a possibility for reassessment of the provincial status after a set period. In his discussion on the Cripps Mission (pp 291-8), Jaswant Singh does not even mention the name of Jinnah or his reaction except highlighting C. Rajgopalacharia's acceptance of the principle of partition as demanded by the Muslims. He was able to convince members of the Congress to pass two resolutions in their meeting on 23 April 1942. "One recommended that the AICC accept the Muslim demand for partition; resume talks with the Muslim League on that basis, then, through mutual understanding establish an interim, national government so as to face the emergency of war". (p 297). The second resolution was about the provincial governments irrelevant to note here.

Jinnah did not let Muslims to be emotional during the continuous sailbacks to England during 1942-43. The Quit India Movement was at its peak with agitations and disobedience policy of the Congress, coupled with the forthcoming reactions of Indian National Army, joining the Japanese on the eastern front against the Allied, which further upset the Government of India. In 1943 Linlithgow was recalled and instead Wavell took over as viceroy. What Pyralal (the biographer of Gandhi) has written about Wavell was a general assessment of the Congress leaders about him. "A man of great dignity – right lipped, straightforward, warmhearted 'guinea-a-word' Wavell...His sincerity was beyond question". (p 306). Jaswant makes no mention of Wavell meeting Jinnah and how the latter found the new viceroy.

But Gandhi having been released from jail (17th July, 1944), immediately wrote to Jinnah projecting his friendly feelings, not alone for Jinnah but for the entire Muslim community. Gandhi, a different class of politician than Jawaharlal Nehru and Vallabhbhai Patel, had once suggested to Jinnah (1942) that if the All India Muslim League declared to join the All India National Congress in her struggle for complete independence "The Congress will have no objection to the British government transferring all the powers it today exercises to the Muslim League on behalf of the whole of India". (p. 309). Jinnah took no notice of this offer since it was a personal statement of Gandhi and not a party decision. "If the Congress was serious," Jinnah said, 'they should come forward and that could be considered.'

But Gandhi was too optimistic about Congress. Even in early 1947 he committed a similar statement meeting Mountbatten. "Give the baby to Muslim League rather than cut it into two pieces". "Will the Congress agree?" asked Mountbatten. "yes they should," replied Gandhi. But there was no one to listen to Gandhi. He was a spent bullet.

Gandhi - Jinnah talks which began on 9th September 1944 at Jinnah's Bombay residence is recorded by Pyarelal, beside many others. Pyarelal's first hand information which he received from Gandhi himself, and noted by Jaswant Singh, is important in the sense that it reflects upon some motives of our author for it projects Jinnah adamant and uncompromising. Later Gandhi meeting Rajaji, observed, "His contempt for your formula and his contempt for you is staggering." Jaswant also records some exchanged statements during the talks. Gandhi was insisting on Rajaji's formula. "you can call it Pakistan if you like." Jinnah was insisting upon the Lahore Resolution, which Gandhi did not like to discuss. The talks were occasionally distracted. But Jinnah's serious concern was that he was negotiating with a person who had absolutely no bearing upon the Congress High Command. Even if there was some agreement and understanding between the two, it could not be binding upon the Congress. To Quaid-i-Azam such talks were sheer waste of time. Gandhi, at the end of the talks, tried that Jinnah should recognize Indian Hindu, Muslims, and Christians as one nation. This was again negation of the Lahore Resolution, which Jinnah was not prepared to accept. Gandhi wanted to discuss the issue with the Executive Council of the Muslim League and if possible before its General Assembly. But that too was disallowed.

It is here that Jaswant Singh notes some quality character traits of Jinnah, which many have caused the displeasure of his party-men. But he cleverly put the praise of Jinnah in Gandhiji's mouth, "He (Gandhi) continued to have the highest regard for Jinnah's singlemindedness, his great ability and integrity which nothing could buy." (p. 326).

In April 1945, while the issue of the interim government was being probed Bholabhai Desai and Liaquat Ali Khan came to an agreement, which was on the basis of parity at the Viceroy's Executive Council between the two major political parties. Irrespective of the criticism it received from the Congress's

circle, it was taken into consideration during the Simla Conference. Jinnah stuck to the principle agreed earlier, that the Muslims representation in the Executive Council must be represented by the All India Muslim League. Whereas Wavell under pressure from opponents of Jinnah, brought a Muslim member from amongst the Unionist of the Punjab, not acceptable to Jinnah and the Conference failed. Jaswant Singh has a long discussion on this issue spread over to about 20 pages, discrediting many claims of Jinnah and the Muslim League, particularly one that for Indian Muslims the Muslim League was the sole representative organization. He said this was as incorrect as once the Indian National Congress claimed to be the sole representative of the entire Indian people. Jinnah characterized the Wavell Plan as a 'snare' and a 'death warrant' for the Muslim League because even if all the Muslims in the Government were to be Muslim Leaguers, they would still be in a minority of one third in the Cabinet. Representations of all other minorities, would in actual practice invariably vote against us" (p. 346). Jinnah's stand on Simla Conference did upset many Congress leaders, who began criticizing him. Even Wavell's concluding address, taking the onus of the failure of talks upon himself, did not cool down the Congress elite who expected their membership of the Central Cabinet under the Viceroy, just one step forward. Jinnah dragged them away, for Wavell was not prepared to offer interim government only to the members of the Congress. They were unable to understand, as Jaswant points out "why should Jinnah acquire a veto over the Congress?" (p. 348).

In late 1945 (August) fresh elections to the Central and Provincial Legislatures were announced. Congress was hopeful that the precedent of 1935-36 may be repeated. The Muslim League declared that they would contest elections just on one issue. i.e. creation of Pakistan. The polls of the Central Legislative Assembly were held in December 1945. Muslim League won all the Muslim seats with ninety percent of polling, which proved the contention of Muslim League that it was the sole representative of the Muslims. The provincial elections confirmed, with Muslim League winning all seats, that they wanted Pakistan. The NWFP was the only province where Red Shirt leaders, in power, resisted the formation of League's ministries alike the Punjab where the Unionist, too, were

reluctant to hand over power. The Congress was behind the pressure, which caused partition of the Punjab and effected a referendum in NWFP to determine its future.

Meanwhile the Cabinet Mission reached India towards the last week of March 1946. They consulted political leadership because the Congress leaders were trying to convince the Mission the virtue of the undivided India, the League insisted upon the partition. The mission announced its plan 5 May 1946 and the all parties deliberation on the Grouping scheme and the federal structure, continued at Simla, but even the prolonged discussion did not prove fruitful.

Jaswant Singh has recorded some notes from the secret file of Lord Wavell which show some verbal assurances given to Mr. Jinnah 3 June 1946". There is no indication as to the nature of assurances but it should be evident that when the Muslim League accepted Cabinet Mission Plan and the Congress rejected, Viceroy Lord Wavell ought to have offered Muslim League to form the Government, as provided by the Cabinet Mission Plan. But Wavell did not move. Even after when the Congress rejected the Plan, she was offered to form the Government, the Muslim League, then rejected the Plan and carried out the Direct Action Day in return. Was that the outcome of the verbal assurance, Jaswant Singh quotes with the authority of Wavell's secret file. The author mentions the riots which followed the Direct Action Day caused "killing of 6000 humans in Calcutta alone, over 15000 were injured." It had an immediate and cascading effects all around, death now began to stalk India." (p. 383) Jaswant wrote about Jinnah at this occasion. "Could one have foreseen all this ominous portents? With the Cabinet delegation returning to Britain, the Muslim League felt, it had been out maneuvered, also let down and then deceived. Since the formation of interim government had been shelved, Jinnah demanded that the election to the Constituent Assembly be also postponed, and when that demand was turned down he accused the Cabinet Mission of a flagrant breach of faith". (p. 386). He quotes Gandhi who also regretted that the Cabinet Mission should not have dealt with him (Jinnah) in that legalistic manner." (ibid). This quote from Gandhi show what the Cabinet Mission did was legal and the man who passed his struggle for freedom without ever breaking law, was now behaving otherwise. This was coupled with

another statement from Gandhi, “he (Jinnah) is a great Indian and the recognized leader of a great organization.” Jaswant Singh’s version against the Muslim League and Jinnah was let loose thereafter. “In presence of their resolution of 29 July, the Muslim League setup a Council of Action. It was behind closed doors but the programme of action which it drew up and which was subsequently elaborated and broadcast by the Muslim League press was clear enough. The first open conflict between Islam and Heathenism had been fought and won by 313 Muslims of Arabia.” A leaflet bearing a picture of Jinnah with a sword in hand, said, “We Muslims have had the crown and have ruled. Be ready and take your swords... O Kafar! Your doom is not far and the general massacre will come.” (p. 387).

Jaswant records only what the Muslims were doing without even once noting what the R.S.S. and the Jan Sangh did. Even the foreign press cuttings included are only those which reflect the events following the Direct Action. What about the hundred and thousand of Hindu killings in Calcutta, Noakhalis, Bihar and many other places of innocent Muslims butchered and their homes burnt?

Towards the end of the Chapter: A war of succession. Diverging Path – Jaswant Singh includes some passages from Wavell’s diary including a letter of Gandhi to the Viceroy trying to convince him that in the wake of bloodshed around and the tension mounting, it was necessary that the Government in England transferred power to the Congress immediately, for the rioters may not listen to an army which has little stakes in India. Nehru, too, in a letter tried to convince Wavell that his statement about the Cabinet Mission Plan was misinterpreted. He had accepted the plan in its entirety. (p. 393).

Stymied negotiation (Chapter 8) begins with a sorrow reflection of meetings between Congress and League leaders with the members of the Cabinet Mission, individually or collectively. What pained him was that Jinnah alone was the spokesman of his party, with sole authority and his voice was considered as the voice of the League. On the contrary, the Congress leadership was divided in their approach, though their objective was the same – to keep India undivided and retention of the Hindu political predominance. Such varied approaches delivered to the Cabinet Mission some time irritated them which

Jaswant Singh has elaborated quoting from Wavell's Diary. (pp. 395-97).

In 1946, (August, September) renewal of talks between Jinnah and Gandhi with initiative of the Nawab of Bhopal, the Congress recognized Muslim League sole representative of the Muslims. But the subsequent talks between Jinnah and Nehru failed because Nehru was not happy over the agreed formula, particularly its wording. He wanted to change it but Jinnah was firm. What has been agreed upon, could not be changed. An exchange of letters between Nehru and Jinnah proved futile and finally the Congress leadership rejected the formula. Jaswant Singh laments how the Congress put at stake the name and honour of Gandhi, not recognizing the formula. "Mohanlal Karamchand Gandhi, born of the soil of India and with that soil permeating every cell of his body, who saw with great tragedy now loomed over us, none else did, little wonder therefore, that he remained silent". (p. 400). This is in continuation of Jaswant Singh's contemptuous criticism of the Congress Leadership, how it negated the last effort of the great leader (Gandhi) for saving the partition of India "There remains just one single note which metronome like keeps striking the same chord. Why was there such desperate hummy to destroy? And why do we ponder now upon all this if it was clear cut then as Nehru would have us believe?" (ibid.)

Another effort of H.M.'s government (3-6 December 1946) with Indian leaders for a compromise on Cabinet Mission Plan also failed because of Nehru's return to India on 6 December, leaving parley's unfinished. According to Jaswant Singh the Congress, thus, lost the last chance to keep India united when at the close of the talks, it was evident the two constituent Assemblies, instead of one were in the offing. Pakistan was now inevitable.(p. 410). By January 1947 tension was so mounting and communal feelings at their hight, Sardar Patel demanded resignation of League members in the interim government, or face a civil war. (p. 413). Meanwhile, Wavell was withdrawn form India and Louis Mountbatten appointed instead. June 1948 was declared the ultimate withdrawal of England from India transferring power to the respective authority under the Constituent Assembly. The Congress had by March 1947 come to a decision already agreed upon by Jawaharlal Nehru and

Vallabhai Patel. The working committee of the Congress adopted a resolution which accepted the partition of India with partition of the Punjab and Bengal. "Within one month of Lord Mountbatten's arrival (20 March 1947) Jawaharlal Nehru, until then, a vocal opponent of partition, had become a committed advocate of it." (p. 419). Dr. Rajindra Prasad, the President of the Constituent Assembly stated on 28 April '47 "House should be prepared not for a division of India but also for a division of some provinces as well." (p. 420).

Jaswant does not provide the details of the partition plan as to how quickly it was prepared and passed by the Congress and V.P. Menon carried it to London alongwith Mountbatten to precipitate the British withdrawal from India on 15 August 1947 by partitioning India a day earlier. Jaswant confesses 'Attee and his Cabinet accepted the Menon Plan.' (p. 421).

Mountbatten's Viceroyalty: The End of the Raj is not an important chapter for it reflects more upon viceroy's activities, plus a mentioning of some accusation against the Congress leadership and their various, undiplomatic statements whereas Jinnah and his party men in the League were devoted to the goal of obtaining a Muslim homeland insisting upon the two Nation theory, which eventually won them not only freedom but also achieving them target.

Pakistan: Birth, Independence: The Quaid-i-Azam's last journey. The last Chapter before 'In Retrospect' include some opinions about Jinnah, collected by Jaswant Singh along with some odd comparison between Jinnah and Gandhi. The purpose of this comparison is also evident and self explanatory, which needs no comments.

After a brief analysis of Jinnah's landing at Karachi for assuming the office of the Governor General, and his early activities in the formation of Government, Jaswant Singh discusses his sudden death. (11 September, 1948) comparing this loss with Indian's (in January 1948) in the cold blooded murder of Gandhi. either leaders, Jaswant Singh states have no replacements since. Here, he is absolutely right. India direly needs another Gandhi for an Indian political vision, other than that of Hindutwa, Pakistan, too, seems running after an ideal of Quaid-i-Azam: sharp, sagacious, honest, and devoted to the cause of Pakistan. Jaswant Singh has some words of praise for

the Quaid, quoting from the editorials of Hindustan Times and the Times of India.

“Mr. Jinnah was something more than Quaid-i-Azam, supreme head of the state, to people who followed him; he was more than the architect of the Islamic nation he personally called into being. He commanded their imagination as well as their confidence. ... Few Statesmen have shaped events to their policy more surely than Mr. Jinnah. He was a legend in his lifetime.” (p. 475).

Is that what Jaswant Singh quoted irritated his party men? Its pity since he immediately quoted another statement from the Hindustan Time discrediting Jinnah of the high traits noted earlier. “He (Jinnah) did not create Pakistan in the sense that Gandhiji created free India. Mr. Jinnah had neither the gift nor the desire to mould the outlook of his people, put them through severe ordeal, set before them difficult goals, and fashion for them an organization and leadership which had stood the test of time and trial.” (p. 475)

Another statement from the times of India is more expressing Jaswant Singh’s mind, “No spiritual parallel can be drawn between Mahatma Gandhi and the Quaid... While one dealt in spiritual values and concepts, the other was confined by nature of a strong rigid character to ruthless legalism, technically constitutional to coldly uncompromising which yet demanded without fear of the consequences, its full pound of flesh...Weather he did or not, the consequences of his death were fateful for his own creation: Pakistan: it lost has its focus.” (p.476). Another statement of Jawaharlal Nehru which Jaswant Singh has quoted is being omitted as it is only a statement of a person who himself suffered from a number of complexes, notwithstanding his recognized leadership.

The author raises question in conclusion reflecting his confused mind. A question on Muslim Nationhood, Two Nation Theory, Nature of Functional Islam, and the logic of partition. Many of these questions are answered in this review. But In Retrospect needs a suitable analysis to know what it really means and with what objectives.

Jaswant Singh has ofcourse been helped by a number of historians in the compilation of this most interesting work, which though have occasional repetition, yet it sustains interest of the

reader. Few politicians have compiled histories of their countries, except recording their reminiscences, but Jaswant Singh surpasses them all. Apart from the motives of this book, which may have some reservations in Pakistan, in India, it should create, as already done, an impact which may politically be beneficial for the Bharatia Janata Party in the long run.