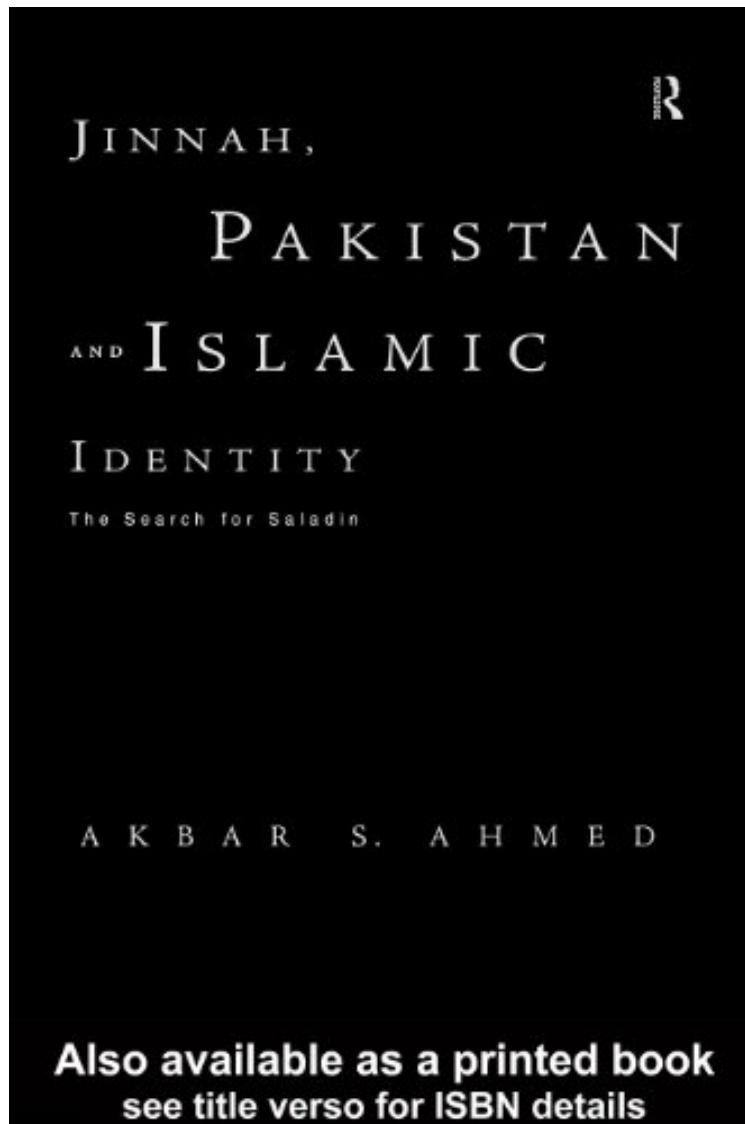


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## Jinnah, Pakistan and Islamic Identity: The Search for Saladin

Von Akbar Ahmed

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**Von Akbar Ahmed : Jinnah, Pakistan and Islamic Identity: The Search for Saladin** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Jinnah, Pakistan and Islamic Identity: The Search for Saladin:

Kundenrezensionen Hilfreichste Kundenrezensionen 1 von 1 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. This book was really needed. Von Ein Kunde It is great to see that atlast there is a bok that can effectivelt the enormous Indian propaganda of defaming Jinnah. This book is realistic and makes the reader understand what Jinnah meant. The Indians will always try to define the creation of Pakistan asif the Muslims of the sub continent were mis-led on the

name of religion but this book shows the real face of the Hindus. It shows that what caused Jinnah, a liberal Muslim and an ardent preacher of Hindu-Muslim unity to demand Pakistan. This book exposes the real, level face of the Hindus whose extremism and narrow mindedness forced the Muslims of the sub-continent to demand Pakistan. Being a Muslim from India, I am amongst the un-fortunate ones who are still trying to survive against these Hindu extremists who have made hell for all the minorities of this country. 0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich.

Another apologist for the 2 nation theory--w/a fancy title Von Yvette C. Rosser (y.r.rani@mail.utexas.edu) Much of the historical discourse and social analysis in Pakistan is based on negative methodologies which seek to justify Pakistan's failures and shortcomings by pointing out similar problems that also exist in neighboring India. Instead of focusing their academic lens on the Pakistani situation, and be the view positive or negative, analyzing what is seen within their nation, scholars repeatedly use the tact of dismissing problems in Pakistan by discussions of parallel problems in India. Within this paradigm, Pakistani scholarship is defined by placing the country's problems in a less negative light in comparison to India's problems. This could be called the theory of self justification, but more aptly results in self negation. A vivid example of this methodology can be found in the book by Akbar S. Ahmed, "Jinnah, Pakistan and Islamic Identity: the Search for Saladin". It is one of a great number of books published in Pakistan during 1997. Many of these books published in honor of Pakistan's fiftieth anniversary, such as Feroz Ahmed's "Ethnicity and Politics in Pakistan," and others such as the work by the linguist, Dr. Tariq Rehman, represent an effort to look objectively at topics such as Pakistani nation-building, society, cultural myths, domestic and foreign policy. Prior to this golden jubilee moment of self analysis, most books that graced the OUP or Vanguard shelves were basically biased and very much situated in the straight jacket of the two nation theory. This is not to criticize their nationalist orientation, all nations write nationalist histories, but an observation that historical discourse in Pakistan is dominated by negative images of India and Hinduism. In general, the majority of books in the field of the social sciences written in Pakistan have lacked theoretical basis and are short on angst and verve. Dr. Rahat, an intellectual in Karachi joked, "In Pakistan social scientists are more social than scientific!" However, since 1997, there have been several books written about the Bangladesh experience and other previously taboo and controversial issue, such as the recent book by Ahmad Saleem, "Blood Beaten Track", which does not lay the blame squarely in Indira Gandhi's lap, for conspiring to "Sink the Two Nation theory in the Bay of Bengal". In Akbar S. Ahmed's book, "Search for Saladin", if judged by its cover, the fairly post modern title gives the impression that perhaps the book would be theoretically based and hopefully less biased than the standard fare offered up as state sponsored Pakistani scholarship. In this regard the book was a disappointment. Ahmed is a well know Pakistani scholar, and though a civil servant and therefore perhaps prone to rubbery research results stretching to accommodate the reigning regime, he is a fellow at Selwyn College, Cambridge and would probably get a wider reading audience in the West. Unfortunately, in this book he has fallen once again into the prevailing discourse of Pakistani historians who define their nation in the negative, in terms of what it is not. "We are not Hindus. We are not Indians. We will not be ruled by the Hindus. We do not practice the evil caste system. We do not mistreat our minorities. We do not attack our neighbors." Through the decades Pakistani writers have used this discourse of negation consistently describing their nation in contrast to Hindu India's other. There have been far too few examples of reflexivity, inward looking analysis. In this book by Ahmed much of the discussion centers on communalism in India. He refers to books by Veena Das, Asghar Ali Engineer, Sarvepalli Gopal, Kumari Jayawardena, T.N. Madan, Ashish Nandy, Khushwant Singh, etc. He uses these Indian authors' work to prove his points about the sufferings of minorities in India, couched in the usual anti-Indian Pakistani-centric rhetoric. He never pauses to question why there are so many open and frank books about the plight of minorities in India and there are very few such books about the problems faced by minorities in Pakistan. He doesn't mention the bishop who blew his brains out on the city hall steps to protest continuing officially sanctioned harassment of the Christian community in Pakistan and the death sentence handed down to a young Christian boy. He fails to mention that Hindus and other minorities are delegated to second class citizens through their prejudicial voting system and blasphemy laws. Or that women are also second class citizens living under the burden of Hudood laws. He can not see the problems in his own nation, for he is too busy looking for problems in India. Once again, Pakistan is not looking at Pakistan for its own meaning, it is looking to India to justify its own failings. Akbar dwells extensively on rape during the Bombay riots of 1993, citing the suffering in several pages, but he dismisses rape by Pakistani soldiers in Bangladesh with less than one sentence. These types of examples are to be found throughout the book. It must be said that some of the most exciting and theoretically based and insightful scholarship in Pakistan is coming from the small group of feminist intellectuals associated with such centers as Simorgh, ASR, and Sahe in Lahore. In books purporting to be more objective and intellectual, such as, "Jinnah, Pakistan and Islamic Identity: the Search for Saladin," the author though appearing to be sympathetic to the Bengalis and regretting the racism dealt out to them during their 24 years under West Pakistani domination, still does not mask his inherent bias, as can be seen in the following quote in which he relates a conversation he had with General Yaqub Khan, who "summed up the situation he faced before the military crackdown. Pakistan is like a Ming vase, priceless and delicate, he said. Mujib-ur-Rehman, leading the Bengali nationalist party the Awami League and later President of Bangladesh, is like a fly sitting on it. We have to smack the fly but make sure the vase does not break [said Yaqub]. Only a few months later his colleagues would use a hammer to

swat the fly; they would smash the vase and the fly would be unharmed." (end quote) Bangladesh's most famous hero of their liberation struggle, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the father of the nation, is unapologetically reduced to an insect in this 1997 Pakistani account. In the entire narrative as presented by Akbar S. Ahmed, there is only one passing mention of the general elections called by Yahya Khan, but nothing about the cancellation of the National Assembly; nothing about Bhutto's political machinations. The creation of Bangladesh is blamed on Indian cunning and a incipient Bengali irredentialism. Ahmed ends his discussion of Bangladesh with numerous excerpts from newspapers about crime and violence in Dhaka and notes from Bengalis who complain about RAW's influence and the failure of the state. . . as if to say that the problems of East Pakistan were not solved by the creation of Bangladesh. This book is a good example of typical Pakistani apologist scholarship, where M.A. Jinnah is standing near the gates of heaven. . . it is the same old story with a fancy title.0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. a shallow book, full of unsubstantiated assumptionsVon Ein KundeWhen you read a book that depends on things like the impression of a security guard who has viewed Jinnah in a parade to form the basis of what Jinnah was REALLY like, you know you are in trouble.The author often takes the idea of a monolithic Muslim community as agiven and goes from there. So if a Muslim poet has written a despairing poem, it is not that the poet is in despair or the community is in despair but that the MUSLIMS are in despair.When Hindus and Muslims have fought in battle together, the author supposes the Hindu must have felt odd fighting for a Muslim ruler. Nobody is arguing that Hindu and Muslims are brothers but the authors easy conclusions to fit his thesis are laughable.He often looks at WHO has written rather than WHAT has been written. The inconsistency of Jinnah fighting against the Hindu Mahasabha while strongly propounding Islamic identity in the midst of the minorities of Punjab and Bengal is not properly explored. In the manner in which it was not enough to have the word of a Gandhi to determine the fate of the Muslims, the author ignores it was not enough to rely on the word of Jinnah to determine the fate of Pakistan's Hindus.At the end of the day, the only thing that Jinnah did was give a name to a region (Pakistan) that would have been Muslim dominated anyway, he did nothing to solve the problem of Muslim minorities in India. That failure is not addressed in this book because the author starts his book with statements that assume the whole discussion away: such as there were three forces, British, Hindu and Muslim. His interviews with Dina Jinnah result in a few words here and there being pulled to make the author's point. You don't get a sense of Dina Jinnah herself. Maybe, the author needed to do that to sell to his Pakistani audience.

KurzbeschreibungEvery generation needs to reinterpret its great men of the past. Akbar Ahmed, by revealing Jinnah's human face alongside his heroic achievement, both makes this statesman accessible to the current age and renders his greatness even clearer than before.Four men shaped the end of British rule in India: Nehru, Gandhi, Mountbatten and Jinnah. We know a great deal about the first three, but Mohammed Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, has mostly either been ignored or, in the case of Richard Attenborough's hugely successful film about Gandhi, portrayed as a cold megalomaniac, bent on the bloody partition of India. Akbar Ahmed's major study redresses the balance. Drawing on history, semiotics and cultural anthropology as well as more conventional biographical techniques,Akbar S. Ahmadpresents a rounded picture of the man and shows his relevance as contemporary Islam debates alternative forms of political leadership in a world dominated (at least in the Western media) by figures like Colonel Gadaffi and Saddam Hussein..deAugust 1997 marked the 50th anniversary of India and Pakistan's independence from Great Britain. That hard-won independence, however, came with a high price: a bloody partition of the subcontinent into Hindu-majority India and the Muslim state of Pakistan. Almost as soon as Jawaharlal Nehru pronounced India a new nation, the butchery began--a bloodbath in which millions perished and for which there are still no exact figures. What Mohandas K. Gandhi was to India, Mohammed Ali Jinnah was to Pakistan--the architect of its statehood. In Jinnah, Pakistan and Islamic Identity, Akbar S. Ahmed shines the spotlight on a man whose character, he feels, has been distorted by the official Pakistani line. Though Jinnah was clearly interested in ensuring a homeland for Muslims, Ahmed's book makes clear that this London-trained lawyer was no Islamic fundamentalist. The author's take on Indian-Pakistani history, his account of Jinnah's involvement, and his ideas about the future of Pakistan and the Islamic world are both thought-provoking and important.Pressestimmen""Jinnah, Pakistan and Islamic Identity virtually explodes with provocative ideas and new ways of looking at partition, at Jinnah, and at South Asia as a whole. [Ahmed] is passionate about his subject, but also able to stand back when necessary, especially when analyzing where Pakistan and the larger Islamic world are going."-"The New York Times Book ..."Ahmed has written a discursive, provocative book.... a stimulating, and often arresting read."-"World Policy Journal "Ahmed's distinct contribution is his attempt to relate [Pakistani nationalism] to the larger subject of Islamic identity."-"Choice "Akbar Ahmed's book looks at Jinnah from Pakistani, Indian and Western perspectives. It reveals a highly complex figure little known in the annals of India's independence movement, which included Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi" F.A.O. Journal ."