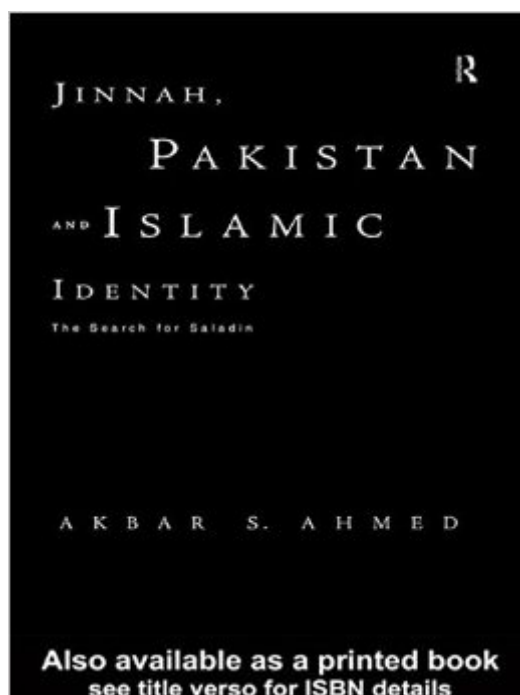


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Jinnah, Pakistan And Islamic Identity: The Search For Saladin



Synopsis

Every 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. Ahmad presents 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.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

There appears to be a great deal of angst attached to the cult of personality and the legend of Jinnah. He is an enigmatic figure portrayed by historians as both pragmatic and erratic. Prof. Ahmed seems to have decided to discuss Jinnah as the main driving force behind the formation of Pakistan. The reasons for the creation of this state are mixed and can be argued from many perspectives. As a reviewer noted below much of Pakistan's population is not Indian at all, but speaks Iranian languages and was separated by the British from Afghanistan and Iran during the late 19th and early 20th century. The western Panjab and Sind were both predominantly Muslim

regions along the periphery of Indian civilization, but Sind and parts of the Panjab have had divergent histories from that of most of India. The invasions of Cyrus and Darius' Persian empire annexed the area that is now Pakistan and then Alexander the Great did the same. The empires of India's golden age, the Mauryans and the Guptas did not directly rule the area of Pakistan, but did exact tribute. Buddhism gained a major foothold in Pakistan before Islam and a large minority of Zoroastrians can be traced through the many ruins found mostly in the Afghani province of the Northwest Frontier and other areas. Kashmir is also part of this divergent region and analysis of the past helps to better understand why Muslim leaders of British India chose to band together and call for a Muslim state in the northwest. Many appear to have been Panjabis, while Muslims throughout thought it a good idea to establish a homeland for all the Muslims of British India. This was not a very realistic goal since Hindus were and are the majority in areas outside of Pakistan and Kashmir.

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